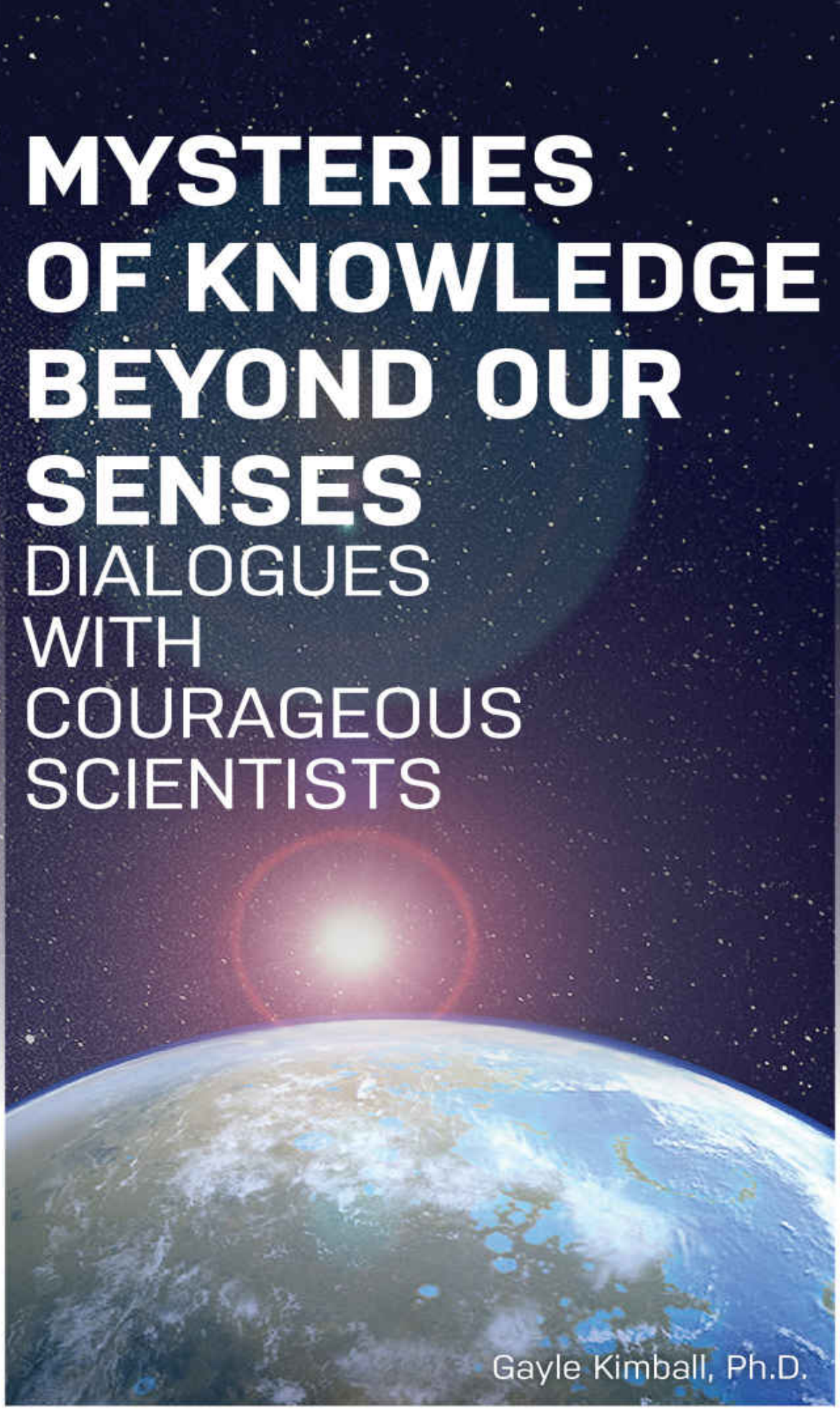
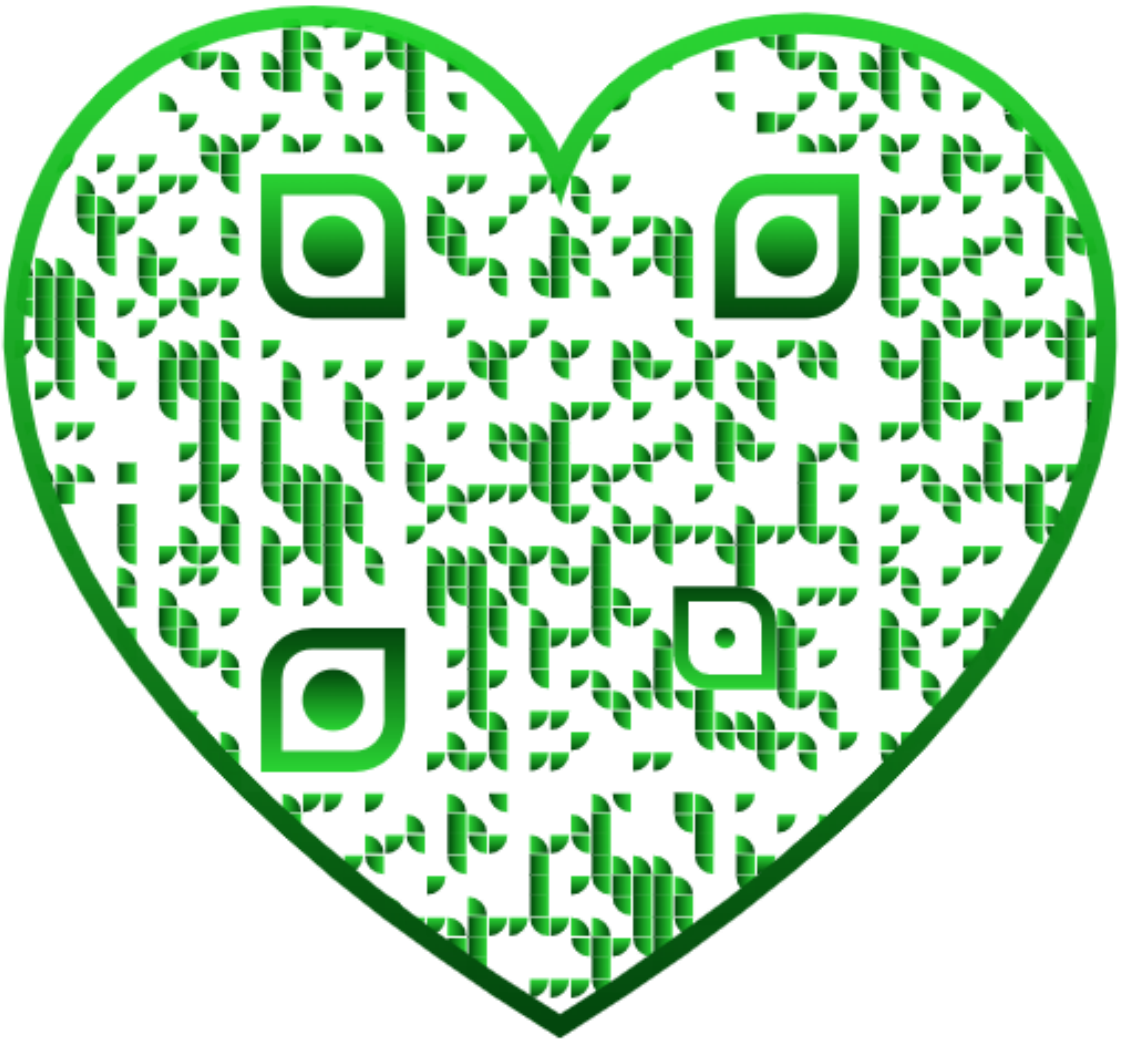
MYSTERIES OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND OUR SENSES

DIALOGUES WITH COURAGEOUS SCIENTISTS



Gayle Kimball, Ph.D.



MYSTERIES OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND OUR SENSES

Dialogues with Courageous Scientists

Gayle Kimball, Ph.D.

Photo of the California coast by the author

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.

Albert Einstein

When science begins to investigate non-physical phenomena, they will make more progress in the first decade than in the entire history of science.

Nikola Tesla

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Introduction
Scientists Discover Reality is Consciousness

Many of our scientific beliefs are limited in that they can't account for the evidence that consciousness exists beyond the brain. The dominant materialist paradigm denies the power of spirit, the miracles of mind and feelings over matter, unconscious access to information, and the possibility of other dimensions beyond what our physical senses tell us—including life after death. The dominant worldview is like the *Flatland* novel published in 1884 about a two-dimensional world. When the hero first discovers a three-dimensional place, he is only able to see a flat circle. When he sees more and reports back on his discovery, he's persecuted.

It's also like the story of the Emperor's New Clothes where the crowd applauds the lie that the naked emperor is wearing beautiful new robes until a small boy has the courage to speak the truth. The dominant worldview often ridicules those with the vision to see other dimensions beyond Flatland, while visionary scientists see the denial of anything but the physical as dogma that ignores extensive research and inhibits our access to subtle information.

Courageous scientists, physicians, and psychologists are creating a new non-materialist scientific paradigm as they struggle to define consciousness. Professor Chris Roe* explained, "We don't have the remotest idea of what we mean by consciousness," but "working on the fringes of the anomalies starts to give us answers." He has the courage to put his head "above the parapet and say the evidence is quite strong," so he has moved from trying to prove psi to researching the process of how it works. [*An asterisk indicates that the scientist is featured in a chapter in the trilogy. Psi refers to anomalous extraordinary experiences.] Shamini Jain* defines consciousness as the "source and substrate of creation. It is beyond mind, emotion and the physical. It's what gives rise to the physical." A useful book is *Conscious: A Brief Guide to the Fundamental Mysteries of the Mind* by Annaka Harris.

The visionary scientists say consciousness doesn't originate in the brain and they use synonyms like One Mind, spirit, energy, the Force, matrix, hologram, meaning fields, biofield, cosmic intelligence, information, panpsychism, beyond space and time, substrate, non-physical web, spiritual computer, and fifth dimension. Its basic language is

mathematics and patterns like fractals. This understanding implies there is another dimension beyond space and time, which may enable psi phenomena like clairvoyance, precognition, and distant healing. The scientists liken the new understanding of reality to the huge effect of the Copernican revolution that challenged the belief that our earth was the center of the solar system (although about one-quarter of Americans still don't know this, according to National Science Foundation surveys.)

These cutting-edge trailblazers persist despite dismissal by those who don't bother to read their scholarly research studies with results thousands of times beyond what chance would predict. Recognition of the importance of our consciousness, intent, and emotions has major implications for health care, morality, and goal achievement. Bernardo Kastrup* views materialist dogma as making us collectively mad, enmeshed in a collective trance that leads to immorality. The condition of our environment is proof of this insanity. Larry Dossey* observes we face a "horrible crisis in ethics and morality." Madonna's 1984 song "Material Girl" spells out the belief system that Mister Right is the man with "cold hard cash."

I interviewed 65 visionary scientists, leaders in the Consciousness Movement, to ask about their personal development, as well as to learn what their research findings reveal about reality, and to discover why they're so brave. The three books in the Mysteries Trilogy explore how consciousness shapes reality, enables healing and provides access to knowledge from beyond the physical senses. These trailblazing scientists conclude that we are more than our physical bodies with more potential than we realize and that science needs to expand to account for consciousness.

"The new science embraces all of science, but it's reframing it to have a bigger perspective. This means that we can make sense of data that doesn't fit and we can make new predictions that can be tested, confirmed, or disconfirmed. It's an expansion of science that reverses and changes the way you experience what you know," explained Gary Schwartz.* He added, "This perspective turns everything on its head. It's like realizing that the sun no longer revolves around the earth" and encourages reuniting science and spirituality (as discussed in Edward Kelly et al.' *Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality).* The scientists are concerned that the prevailing materialist paradigm limits our abilities and

has devastating consequences, including polluting our planet. As youth climate activists say, there is no planet B.

Reality is not what we think it is-that's what I learned from the visionary scientists.[1] Common sense erroneously tells us that we live in a solid material world, that atoms are like billiard balls with definite locations, and time is a one-directional arrow. This is all false. Physicist Max Planck said in 1931, "I have spent my entire life studying atoms and molecules and I'm here to tell you that they don't exist." He explained in his book *The New Science* that there is no matter as such because atoms vibrate and are held together by a force that indicates a "conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter," thus, matter is derived from consciousness.

The materialist belief is that all information comes from the physical senses via the brain, although many people experience ESP, telepathy, a precognitive dream or intuition, awareness of being stared at, or a dramatic near-death experience (NDE) that reveals other dimensions, as it did for neurosurgeon Eben Alexander.* Animals also have these abilities, as evidenced in Rupert Sheldrake's research on dogs that are aware of when their person will come home, even at an unexpected time.[2]

The materialist model of science has, of course, produced a great deal, as evidenced in technologies that can send a person to the moon or create artificial intelligence, but it hasn't succeeded in learning very much about our physical surroundings. Over 95% of the universe is invisible dark matter and dark energy that repels gravity.[3] These mysterious forces have been measured and their effects described but not understood. Various theories try to explain gravity but none are definitive. The observable universe made of atoms comprises less than 5% of the universe. One interpretation of quantum physics predicts multi-universes beyond the known universe that remain a mystery to us.[4]

Neither do we know much about the earth under our feet, revealed by Robert Macfarlane in *The Hidden Depths of the Underland* or the 2019 film *Fabulous Fungi.* The mycelium that rises to the surface as mushrooms are intelligent in that they solve problems, just as slime mold does. The "secret lives" of trees and how they communicate is revealed by biologist Monica Gagliano in *Thus Spoke the Plant*. The classic *Secret Lives of Plants* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird also reveals mysteries around us.

Similarly, genes with a known coding function make up only about 1.5% of our DNA structure, while the non-coding genes are called "junk" and dismissed as useless.[5] In regards to their function, computational biologist Ewan Birney said, "It's slightly depressing as you realize how ignorant you are. But this is progress. The first step in understanding these things is having a list of things that one has to understand, and that's what we've got here."[6] Biologists are learning about epigenetics, discovering that gene expression isn't fixed but changes in response to our emotions and our environment. Our limited knowledge applies to the whole scientific belief system. William Bengston* concludes, "I can tell you there is nothing more liberating than realizing everything you think is true is wrong."

The Visionary Scientists

To find out about the creation of a scientific paradigm that acknowledges we have access to more dimensions than the Flatlanders, I interviewed Ph.D.s and M.D.s who write books and articles that contribute to our understanding of reality and consciousness. This book includes 19 of the scientists; the others in the trilogy are represented in the book on reality and the book on healing. I was inspired by attending the Canadian Energy Psychology conference in Toronto in 2018 where I was struck by the unusual coupling of highly educated scientists talking about spirit and personal experiences of the paranormal. As a feminist academic who does clairvoyant work, I find them very intriguing.

The trilogy explores the scientists' life stories and the influences on their beliefs and personal courage, along with their understandings of our purpose as humans and how the universe really works. I could identify with what Larry Dossey* pointed out; "It takes a rabble-rouser to actually develop the courage" to take on the establishment. He added that most peer-reviewed medical journals won't touch papers on topics like the efficacy of prayer in healing. Like these visionary scientists, curiosity and truth-telling motivate me to point out that the Emperor is naked, there are multiple dimensions, and we have access to information and guidance from beyond the five physical senses.

Using snowball methodology, I asked each of the scientists I interviewed to suggest others. I knew of some whom I researched for my book *Essential Energy Tools: How to Develop Your Clairvoyant and Healing Abilities.* Others were speakers featured at conferences I attended:

Science and Consciousness, the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine, and Energy Psychology. The video interviews were conducted on Skype and most were posted on my YouTube channel for you to see in entirety. (A few interviewees didn't want their videos made public.) The generic questions are listed on the book webpage. Each scientist and I then edited the written transcript to forge a chapter in the trilogy. I added questions for the reader to ponder and references to themes that repeat in other chapters—my comments are in italics.

I attempted to interview psi skeptics including Chris French, Richard Wiseman, Arthur Reber, and James Alcock, as well as the Skeptical Inquirer organization, but only Susan Blackmore* accepted. Reber and Alcock responded to a well-documented article on evidence for psi by Etzel Cardeña by stating they didn't read the studies because they knew they violated the laws of physics, i.e., pigs can't fly so why study flying pigs?[7] They're forgetting quantum physics, as discussed by Steve Taylor.*[8] Psi researchers point out that replication is a problem for many scientists, so they rely on meta-analyses of many studies. Physicist Ed May, who worked on the Star Gate program, described himself in an email as a "total physicalist" and suggested reading his Laboratories for Fundamental Research website, which he founded to study "anomalous cognition." Some of the trilogy scientists respond to the skeptics in their book *Skeptical About Skeptics*.

Common themes that surfaced about these pioneers indicate that the visionary scientists are highly intelligent and did well in school and university, as you would expect. The majority were first-born in their families (35 compared to 26 latter-born). Most of the US scientists grew up on the East or West Coast or live there now, with a few exceptions, such as some born in the Midwestern states like Ohio. Others grew up in the UK or Canada and one each in Germany, Brazil and the Netherlands (Bernardo Kastrup), Italy, or Greece. Some are first-generation with parents from India, Latvia, Palestine, and Ireland, demonstrating the rich contributions provided by immigrant families. Some had health or family problems in their youth that motivated their search for understanding.

Some of the visionary scientists had unexpected and transformative mystical experiences, like physicians John Ryan* and Richard Moss,* physicist Jude Currivan,* psychologist Steve Taylor,* and linguist J.J. Hurtak.* For a few, an NDE was transformative, such as for Eben

Alexander,* Joyce Hawkes, and Marilyn Mandela Schlitz.* Family influences included visionary mothers for James Carpenter,* David Lorimer,* Judith Swack,* Christine Simmonds-Moore* and John Kruth,* or an influential sibling for Marjorie Woollacott,* David Muehsam,* Mary Rose Barrington,* and Larry Burk.* Psychedelic drugs influenced scientists like Susan Blackmore* and David Luke.* Having his "bad back" healed by a man he met while lifeguarding at a swimming pool led William Bengston* to research healing, and an injury led Richard Hammerschlag* to study acupuncture. Overall, curiosity about reality and the willingness to study the data was the main motivation to follow the evidence, however much in conflict with the materialist belief system.

These scientists are often spiritual rather than religious and many went through an adolescent rebellion against religious dogma. More of them have a Jewish background than would be predicted by the small percentage of Jews in the world population. Jeffrey Mishlove* interviewed over a thousand visionary scientists for his video show "New Thinking Allowed."[9] He reported, "I've discovered that quite a number of prominent people in parapsychology have a Jewish background. Jews are a tiny minority but Jewish people are prominent in every cutting edge activity in which I've ever been involved. I would say 95% of the people who explore these areas scientifically do so because, like me, they've had powerful personal experiences. The other 5 to 10% do it out of intellectual curiosity."

Les Lancaster explained, "the combination of the value placed on learning, the leanings towards mysticism, the eschatological idea of promoting a golden age to come, and the pressures of being in exile was hugely formative for Jews entering the modern era. This is a potent mix that breeds pioneers!"

Most of the psi researchers are older white men, as is true of the trilogy scientists. John Kruth* reports that when he started doing research at the Rhine Research Center at age 48, he was considered a youngster. Of 60 scientists included in the trilogy, only two are people of color and only 18 are women. The women have fewer than the 1.9 average children per woman in the US and UK, with 16 children between them.

These visionary scientists are intuitive types rather than sensing personality types on the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (available online to compare your scores with the scientists.)[10] Only two men scored sensing rather than intuitive. They're more extroverted than the typical research

scientist: Our group profile is Extrovert, Intuitive, Feeling, and very close but slightly more Judging, called "Idealist Teachers or Champions." Some of the scientists are interested in the Enneagram as to tool for self-understanding, like Charles Tart* and Judith Swack.* (More about their typologies is on the book website.)

Some readers wondered why I included astrological types in a book about science: Their most common signs are Sagittarius (10) and Aquarius and Libra (both 8). One reason is astrology is a shorthand to personality type for those who find it useful and, second, I was curious how they'd respond to a controversial topic. I've found my natal chart accurate: For example, I have fiery Mars strengthened by its position in the constellation Aries the ram in my 10th house of occupation, indicating I've focused on work. The visionary scientists enjoy their research and get grounded by being in nature. An unusual number are also musicians or singers. "Curious" is the most common word they use to describe their drive to understand reality on a deep level and they like being on the cutting edge of discovery.

The New Non-Materialist Paradigm

Although researchers like Dean Radin* report on thousands of double-blind studies with results in some cases trillions of times beyond what you would expect by chance, the findings are often dismissed as pseudoscience or "woo-woo." Radin suggests, "What is needed for a new paradigm is a more comprehensive model of reality where consciousness becomes just as fundamental, if not more so, than materialism." Actually, idealism is very old, defined as the belief that reality is mentally constructed. Ancient Greek philosophers, such as Anaxagoras in 480 BCE, emphasized the primacy of mind and consciousness although his contemporary, Plato's idea of ideal forms is better known. Ancient Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism also recognized that the material world is *maya*, illusion, and through meditation, sages develop psi abilities called *siddhis,* such as clairvoyance or bilocation. More modern siddhis are described in *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda.

The Bible is full of references to healing, prophecy, prayer, and what Paul calls "gifts of the Holy Spirit" in 1 Corinthians 12, but many of our scientists were more influenced by Eastern religious thought and are meditators. Some participate successfully in their own experiments with

ESP, etc. They realize the impact of experimenter expectations and value qualitative research such as case studies—including their own first-person psi experiences. They encourage openly sharing data online.

Psychic remote viewers led by Russell Targ* in the Star Gate government programs during the Cold War sketched secret Soviet missile silos, a huge new secret Soviet submarine, the location of a downed Russian military plane before it was discovered by the Soviets in North Africa, and drew targets before they were even selected. The remote viewers were only given numbers with no hint about the target, paid attention to their perceptions, and drew pictures of the target while in their offices.

Stephan Schwartz* worked with remote viewers to discover archaeological finds such as Cleopatra's Palace and the Lighthouse of Pharos—one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—as well as sunken ships and a lost Mayan temple. Working in the military as a remote viewer, Paul H. Smith* found the location of drug contraband in a huge container ship while working in his office. Charles Tart* suggests that remote viewers also could be used in therapy to explore the roots of psychological problems. Medical intuitive Caroline Myss' well-known work with Dr. Norm Shealy in his medical practice can be considered a form of remote viewing of a stranger's body.

It follows from materialism that death ends our awareness, but rigorous triple-blind experiments with mediums who accurately communicate with disembodied spirits are conducted by Ph.D.s Julie Beischel* (Windbridge Institute), Gary Schwartz* (University of Arizona), Chris Roe* (University of Northampton), and others. Over 2,500 well-documented cases of children who remember their past lives were collected by Ian Stevenson and Ed Kelly at the University of Virginia.[11] Over one-third of the children had birthmarks and/or phobias representative of death traumas such as wounds that caused their past deaths, or fear of water caused by a drowning death.

Millions of people with NDEs may report undergoing a life review with a loving being where they feel the impact of their lifetime actions.[12] Denying the long-term consequences of our actions (karma) leads to over-emphasis on "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die." Some of the visionary scientists had communication with a dead relative, like Russel Targ* whose daughter gave a message of love in Russian so he would know

it was her and Fred Alan Wolf's* son communicated with him after being killed in an accident.

The old view is that time only moves forward, although Albert Einstein explained that space-time is relative at the speed of light. It seems like fantasy to think that precognition and retrocausality could exist or that intention in the present may change the past. Yet, Dean Radin's experiments connecting subjects to physiological measuring devices while they are shown slides found that their bodies reacted even before an alarming or arousing slide was selected by a computer. Even more astounding, the past output of Random Number Generator machines could be changed by intention—but only if the output hadn't been read, as Roger Nelson* found in his PEAR laboratory at Princeton. (RNGs are computer devices that generate random 0s and 1s.)

The academic bias against psi research means that it's neglected and underfunded to our detriment. Psi is a Greek letter and the first letter of the word "psyche," meaning mind. Psi is used to refer to anomalous or extraordinary experiences, parapsychology, and the paranormal. However, James Carpenter* argues in *First Sight* that "para" should be dropped because we often use these often unconscious intuitive abilities to stay safe. Since the materialist paradigm is so limited and harmful, clearly more research is needed to enhance our physical and emotional health.

The old paradigm believes that scientists can be objective in conducting research, but psi researchers recognize the inevitable effect of the intention and beliefs of the experimenter. Garret Moddel* tried to get around this effect by designing an experiment with two RNGs and two computers with no human involvement. The first round achieved the effect he and his students were looking for. When they ran the experiment again later, there was no effect, leading him to realize that what had changed was his attitude and intent, which the machines reflected. Psi research indicates that we have free will, as opposed to the determinism of the materialist model that says all is determined by chemical interactions, etc. Some quantum physicists also believe the determinism of physical laws denies free will (*see Ruth Kastner**).

The list of psi resources on the book's webpage shows few pertinent college courses. A few donors stand out like Henry and Susan Samueli's 2017 gift of $200 million to the University of California at Irvine to research integrative health care such as acupuncture, naturopathy,

homeopathy, and herbal medicine. The gift evoked criticism and the fear it would "threaten to tar UC Irvine's medical school as a haven for quacks."[13] This article quotes Professor David Gorski as saying the only reason for integrative medicine is "to integrate quackery into medicine." (The Samueli's former institute also funded Shamini Jain's* research in energy healing, which is published in scientific journals.)

To counter this academic bias, visionary scientists established the Scientific and Medical Network (SMN) in the UK, and in the US they organized the Academy for the Advancement of Post-Materialist Sciences, the Society for Scientific Exploration, and the Consciousness and Healing Initiative. SMN member David Lorimer* explained, "The original Network was set up because it still is very unfashionable and perhaps even dangerous to hold a non-material worldview." These organizations also publish and organize conferences. A distinguished and well-known professor who turned down my request to be in the trilogy explained, "I agree with Dean Radin's observation that rigorous scientific psi research is dismissed, but I do not want to become embroiled in public controversy about that." In contrast, this book's scientists have the courage to be embroiled and we'll learn why.

Useful Applications of the Consciousness Paradigm

If our common sense, simplistic notions about material things, locality and distance, time, sources of information, death, and the power of belief are wrong—at least on the quantum level—what are the implications? We need training in how to accurately access non-sensory information and use thoughts and emotions to manifest goals. It's helpful to learn to pay attention to seemingly unrelated synchronistic events, especially what Gary Schwartz* calls "super synchronicity" when we experience six or more related events. They suggest that some form of helpful guidance exists and that we can learn how to access it more deliberately.

Visionary psychoanalyst Carl Jung developed the concept of synchronicity when his patient was describing a dream about a scarab beetle as a similar beetle appeared on the window. Dawson Church gives many more examples in his chapter on synchronicity in his book *Mind to Matter: The Astonishing Science of How Your Brain Creates Material Reality*. He quotes Jung's definition: "Synchronicity is a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is

involved." As we grow on a spiritual path, it happens more often, suggesting a subtle intelligence at play.

The old paradigm values logic and analytical thinking but is uncomfortable with emotions and the content of the unconscious, while the multi-dimensional approach includes what intuition and dreams reveal from the deeper mind. Larry Burk* writes about people who accurately diagnose their own diseases, such as cancer, by paying attention to their dreams. Getting their doctors to pay attention to these dreams was often problematic, or actually led to a death that perhaps could have been avoided if the dream diagnosis was taken seriously.

Stephan Schwartz* got involved in studying Edgar Cayce's channeled information when a stranger arrived at his house to tell him she dreamed that he should be involved in the Cayce Foundation's A.R.E. (Association for Research and Enlightenment). He went on to study there for five years. Henry Reed* leads Dream Helper Circles where members commit to dream one night in a therapeutic way for a target member of the circle and discuss their dreams in the morning. Many of the scientists have precognitive dreams themselves.

The materialist paradigm believes that consciousness only exists when manifested by a physical body and a brain since the physical is all that exists. The new (but actually ancient) view acknowledges that other dimensions may exist. Influential psychologist William James warned against "medical materialism" as being too "simple-minded" in explaining the mystical experiences of Christian saints as purely biological. More recently, neurosurgeon Eben Alexander* was astounded to experience multiple dimensions when meningoencephalitis caused severe damage to his neocortex (the outer surface of the brain, most related to our human awareness) and wiped out his memory. He experienced similar visions to Robert Monroe, founder of the Monroe Institute, whom he knew nothing about at the time. Because of medical advances, an increasing number of people survive to tell about their NDEs and many report mystical experiences that change their understanding of multiple dimensions and the long-term consequences of their actions.

In the old paradigm, since only the material world is viewed as real, useful non-physical communication is often dismissed. This includes ESP, studied by psychiatrist Diane Hennacy Powell,* and telepathy. Many Ganzfeld studies conducted during relaxation or sleep and in James

Carpenter's* men's discussion group succeeded in influencing what the subjects were thinking about. Hundreds of the Ganzfeld studies are viewed as the "flagship of experimental parapsychology."[14] In these experiments, a computer selects a video clip or photo that is later shown to the subject along with three other images and she or he is asked to identify the target image. The accuracy in hundreds of studies is above the 25% rate predicted by chance. As Dean Radin states, "Materialism entails a certain set of assumptions that are perfectly fine for understanding the physical world. But those assumptions (as we understand them today) cannot easily account for all aspects of reality, especially consciousness and psychic phenomena."

The Flatland worldview is that illnesses are cured by drugs and/or surgery, certainly not by prayer from a distance or by healers, although focused intention has impacted machines, cells, bacteria, seed growth, plasma, photons, etc. Practical applications of the multi-dimensional understanding of our abilities include health care, which mainly recognizes the physical dimension. For example, biochemist Joyce Hawkes does effective healing work from a distance, as discussed in our video interview.[15] Energy workers I interviewed on my radio show suggest ways to strengthen our immune systems on my YouTube channel. The health care of the future will utilize treatment modalities from the East and the West, predicts Richard Hammerschlag,* co-founder of CHI. Already many medical schools include integrative health, wellness, and spirituality programs, as discussed in the International Congress on Integrative Medicine and Health.

William Bengston's* skeptical students routinely cure mice injected with mammary cancer (which kills control mice in about 27 days), while the healed mice live out their normal two-year life span. Interestingly, biology students who are embarrassed to be sitting in a lab with their hands around a cage full of mice don't have the same curative outcomes, indicating that the attitude of the healer makes a difference in the healing outcome.

In what seems like a resonance effect, some of the mice injected with breast cancer and placed in used healing cages didn't die of breast cancer, even when the healing practice wasn't consciously directed at them. Bengston is researching duplicating the results by recording healing frequencies while a group of personally trained people heals the mice. The

goal is to transmit the inaudible frequencies through speakers for healing others. When cancer cells were placed by the speakers in Bengston's lab, 68 significant genomic changes occurred in 167 cancer genes. He reports, "Certainly the cells were able to recognize that something was going on here and they responded."

We've known for a long time about the power of placebo to heal, about spontaneous remission of terminal illnesses, and how a person with Dissociative Identity Disorder with multiple personalities ("alters") can have diabetes with one alter and not the other. One alter or personality is allergic and the other isn't; one alter needs glasses and the other doesn't.[16] They can react differently to medication, have different blood pressure readings, heart rate, and EEG readings, which indicates the influence of mind over matter.

Seemingly miraculous occurrences, such as the growing percentages of pharmaceutical trials where the placebo is almost as effective as the drug are dismissed by researchers as irritating. However, logic indicates they should try to figure out how to stimulate the use of suggestion or belief to heal. Placebo has an impact even if the subject knows it's a sugar pill, especially if the pill is colorful and large, as researched by Harvard Professor Ted Kaptchuk. In his book *How Healing Works*, Wayne Jonas, M.D. quotes Kaptchuk as saying, "The main reasons these [healing] effects occur is still a mystery." Hypnosis can also produce biological effects. For example, telling a subject a pencil touch is a lit cigarette can raise a blister on the skin.[17] Prayer can assist in healing; see Larry Dossey's* chapter for an explanation of a flawed Harvard study that discounted its effectiveness.

Psychologist Chris Roe* points out that the evidence "suggests our current psychological model of what it is to be a human being is incomplete." Psychiatrists Robert Alcorn* and Mitchell Gibson,* along with therapist Barbara Stone,* were surprised to discover the negative impact of other-dimensional entities on the mental health of their patients. These three therapists proceeded to develop techniques to remove the invading energies, which improved the lives of their patients. To help people cope with grief after the passing on of someone they love, some (e.g., Christine Simmonds-Moore* and Marilyn Schlitz*) are duplicating Raymond Moody's device, the psychomanteum, to encourage communication with the other side. Other ways to communicate with spirits

are being developed by Gary Schwartz* in Arizona and Patrizio Tressoldi* in Italy.

Some healers found that the energy field is the template for the physical body, and work with the meridians, chakras, and the auric field. John Ryan, M.D.,* for example, uses chakras in his healing work, as I do in phone sessions as I view them as subconscious memory banks. I also use energy psychology tapping on meridian points, such as Emotional Freedom Technique. Yet very little research has been invested in discovering how these phenomena work and how to apply them to healing. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget for the National Center for Complementary Health (established in 1992) should be much larger. Only $126,081,000 was allocated for fiscal year 2020, compared to $43 billion total for the NIH.

These scientists report that factors that may influence psi abilities (like ESP) include: previous experience and belief in psi phenomenon, experienced mediators, artists, musicians, creativity, playfulness, fantasy proneness, relaxed rather than anxious, extroverted, open, able to focus (measured by the Absorption Scale), boundary thinness, positive schizotypy (sometimes called "magical thinking"), bioeccentricity, heart coherence (see Rollin McCraty's* video "Science of Intuition") and being left-handed or ambidextrous.

Psychiatrist Diane Hennacy Powell adds genetics, history of severe trauma (especially in childhood), history of an NDE, ADD, Bipolar Disorder, or autism, and being a mother—in part because of the brain remodeling that occurs under the influence of hormones during pregnancy.

Business and finance are often interested in future forecasts and could utilize psi research and remote viewing to identify future trends, as in Stephan Schwartz's* work, or as explained in Julia Mossbridge's *The Premonition Code*. She suggests that "precogs" could help NGOs predict famines, help patients, guide new college students, etc. Some remote viewers applied their skills to earning money on the Commodities Market. Patrizio Tressoldi* works with devices that respond to intention, hoping that, "Our studies of practical application of mental interaction from a distance are replicated by investigators to convince people that our human potentialities are much more than we experience in normal life." Menas Kafatos* concludes, "The message of all the different spiritual traditions is we are more than we think we are." The materialist

dogma limits our abilities to only what's believed to be common sense and dulls awareness of long-term responsibility for our actions.

Quantum Physics is the Foundation of the New Paradigm

Quantum mechanics is often relied on to explain psi phenomenon, which makes many physicists uncomfortable. There are a variety of quantum theories such as the Russian scientists' torsion field theory[18] or Ruth Kastner's* development of the Transactional Interpretation. A fascinating, and one might say mind-blowing, hidden universe beyond space-time is revealed by the invisible world of quantum physics. It doesn't follow the classical laws of physics, leading physicist Anton Zeillinger to observe, "The world is even weirder than what quantum physics tells us." When two photons are entangled or bonded and though they appear to be separate, if one is sent to another place (even to opposite sides of the galaxy, according to Ronald Hanson) and its spin is changed, the other instantaneously reflects it.

This non-local connection bothered Einstein who dismissed it "spooky action at a distance." He also said, "Concerning matter we have been all wrong. What we have called matter is energy whose vibration has been so lowered as to be discernible to the senses. There is no matter." Scientists have observed entanglement not just with tiny photons or atoms, but with macroscopic objects like diamond crystals.[19] This could explain how psi is possible, perhaps one of the reasons quantum physicist Henry Stapp suggested that non-locality may be the most profound discovery in all of science.

Physicists have no definitive explanation of this non-local distant connection of entangled pairs. How can seemingly separate and distant particles be so connected since Einstein taught us nothing can move faster than the speed of light? Imants Barušs* suggests the existence of intelligent meaning fields beyond space-time. Some relate this dimension to consciousness or the ground of being. It's very appealing to point to quantum non-locality as an explanation for distant healing prayer, ESP, or precognition. However, physicists don't know if there is an information field or even what consciousness is or how it could arise from matter.

This is referred to as "the hard problem of consciousness" that can't be explained by the materialist paradigm. Some of the visionary scientists think of consciousness as benign and helpful, while others don't attribute

feeling to it. They agree it's the ground of being, the source of the material world, not the other way around, and that it's difficult to define. Physics Professor David Kagan warned in a personal communication:

> *If you hang your hat on today's unresolved mysteries of science, you will likely look foolish because eventually these mysteries will be solved and new ones created in the process. Physics is a false god for those pleading their case that their work is valid. Physics changes all the time. It is not The Absolute Truth. It is but one "way of knowing," albeit, it is a powerful way of understanding the structure of our universe from a physical perspective. Nonetheless, it can't be the absolute truth because it is an infinite onion, one layer peeled back at a time revealing yet another layer—ad infinitum, an image suggested by Richard Feynman.*

Some physics theories suggest there are more than three dimensions of space and more than one time dimension. Some scientists believe that the invisible quantum world exists in potentiality and a wave collapses into a particle only when it's observed or measured. It doesn't exist in space-time until then, in a realm beyond our reality. Another theory is that multiple states of potentiality exist at the same time, as in the popular Many-Worlds theory of Hugh Everett. Over time, the Copenhagen interpretation of Niels Bohr predominated, stating that a quantum particle exists in all possible states at once.

Trying to understand what potentiality is before it's measurable, physicist Fred Alan Wolf* explained to me, "Before collapse, only mind stuff exists in the guise of possibilities. Possibilities are potentially able to be something. Atoms are ideas we use to map out what we observe with sensitive instruments." What we know for sure is that we know very little about our world and therefore should be humble and open to new ideas. As Niels Bohr said to Wolfgang Pauli about his theory of elementary particles, "We are all agreed that your theory is crazy. The question that divides us is whether it is crazy enough to have a chance of being correct."[20]

Theoretical physicist Sean Carroll explains that versions of quantum mechanics agree that the universe is composed of wave functions that when measured collapse into either particles (a "cloud of probability" like an electron or the photons in light) or waves.[21] "The world is wavy," he says.

Fields (such as electromagnetic fields researched by CHI members like David Muehsam* and Beverly Rubik* for healing potential) are created by waves. The version that makes more sense to Carroll is Many-Worlds where atoms are in superposition of every possible position until observed, hence there are "many copies of what we think of as the universe." He reports that scientists also agree they don't really understand the quantum realm, hence the well-known saying, "Shut up and calculate."

Many people assume that the effect of quantum physics was to open scientists to the mysterious as Einstein suggested in the book's opening quotation. To the contrary, Wikipedia, YouTube, and journal articles still attack or censor our vanguard scientists as pseudo-scientists. Wikipedia's first sentence about brilliant researcher Dean Radin* is, "He has been Senior Scientist at the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), which is on Stephen Barrett's Quackwatch list of questionable organizations." Another example is Larry Burk,* M.D., who reports, "I gave a TEDx talk, which got censored with a disclaimer by TEDx," regarding his research about women whose dreams revealed their breast cancers. Russel Targ's* TED talk about psychic abilities was banned but you can see it on YouTube.

It's still rare to get psi articles published in scientific journals or to fund research. Although Brian Josephson* is a Nobel prize winner in physics, he reports that Cambridge University graduate students are steered away from him by faculty, slowing his research, despite Nikola Tesla's prediction, "The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence."

My Motivation

My interest in the topic is both a personal and academic interest in spirituality, with a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara. As a teenager, I had my pivotal "aha" experience. The chapter on Hinduism in Huston Smith's book *Religions of Man* (back in the old days when people didn't use inclusive language) explained cause and effect, karma and reincarnation. This gave me the vocabulary to understand the purpose of life as attracting experiences to grow and blossom. When I ask my workshop participants to pick one word to describe them, I often start with "curious." (My typologies are E/INFJ, Enneagram Type 1, Gemini, and first-born.)

I could best understand the notion of an unseen intelligence shaping the important events in my life as similar to physics. When an atom is missing an electron, it attracts the electron it needs to be complete. Very few major events in my life were orchestrated by my conscious mind, except my choice of undergraduate university at UC Berkeley and my first teaching job. I was guided to other milestones since I didn't know enough to ask for them, as when I ran into professors from California State University, Chico at a conference who were looking for their token woman instructor.

I never dreamed I'd switch from teaching high school history to university Religious Studies, to Women's Studies, and now to teaching clairvoyance and healing and doing individual sessions in countries ranging from Japan to Canada, as well as writing books about global youth. I learned clairvoyant techniques when I was on sabbatical from my university and decided I wanted to focus more on spirituality. I'd experienced snatches of psychic information, seeing snapshots of men I would meet in the future and repeating to a boyfriend his thoughts or conversations, but only in anxious moments.

I took classes for a year from the Chico Psychic Institute's clairvoyant program. It's useful to be able to turn on my inner vision at will rather than waiting for some emotionally charged situation to turn it on and to be able to assist others to get to their core issues. Researchers debate if psi abilities can be taught: In my experience, the answer is yes, it can be taught like most skills, as explained in my *Essential Energy Tools*.

The scientists report on how they stay centered and inspired, as well as their research findings. Meditation or prayer, exercise, being in nature and looking at challenges as opportunities for growth keep them in the flow. I wanted to know how they cope with difficult challenges and also how they enjoy life. Most would agree with what Dean Radin said, "I find it exhilarating to explore the edge of the known." Or as Christine Simmonds-Moore reported, "I've always been fascinated by mystery."

Concerned about climate change, growing economic inequality, and the increasing number of autocrats, I asked if they are optimistic or pessimistic. In thinking about the future, some scientists are pessimistic, especially about the harm caused by climate change. Civilization as we know it may not survive, warns Stephan Schwartz. We're the only self-destructive species, says William Bengston. We're in some ways devolving and creating disasters, agrees Mitchell Gibson. Capitalism is messing us up,

points out Brian Josephson, and James Carpenter agrees the wealthy elite has too much power.

The optimists believe that we're seeing a global awakening of spiritual awareness, especially among young people, and that part of the transition is exposing the broken systems and injustices like racism and sexism. We're seeing an uprising of sanity, believes Larry Dossey.

Some pointed to Steven Pinker, author of *The Better Angels of Our Nature,* who argues that violence and wars have decreased. Others believe we're part of a divine plan and have non-human helpers. Advances in technology will be helpful, although side effects such as job loss or too much time spent in front of screens are problematic. The bottom line is will we turn around climate warming? Does it take a pandemic to reduce pollution as COVID-19 has? Please comment and stay current on the book webpage, where this introduction is available to share.

Resources

Bibliographies about psi research:
Eben Alexander (http://ebenalexander.com/resources/reading-list)
David Luke (https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2019/03/13/psi-resources-online-articles-books-compiled-by-david-luke-ph-d-for-his-course-psychology-of-exceptional-human-experience)
Dean Radin (http://deanradin.com/evidence/evidence.htm)
Charles Tart (http://blog.paradigm-sys.com/links-and-resources),

Mysteries Trilogy webpage: https://visionaryscientists.home.blog

Characteristics of the visionary scientists:
https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2019/12/11/characteristics-of-the-visionary-scientists-featured-in-the-mysteries-trilogy/

This introduction: https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2019/11/11/what-is-reality-the-new-non-materialist-paradigm/

Interview questions:
https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2019/11/11/interview-questions-for-visionary-scientists/

Psi resources: journals, groups, universities, conferences website:
https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2019/11/11/psi-resources-journals-

groups-conferences-websites/ (A historic list of paranormal researchers is available online.[22])

Psi research: https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2019/12/11/psi-phenomena-research-by-visionary-scientists-in-the-mysteries-trilogy/

Video interviews with the Visionary Scientists: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYQz9QMYs2b1R1uAKnMzWQQ

Abbreviations

ESP: extrasensory perception
IONS: Institute of Noetic Sciences (noetic means inner wisdom or knowledge)
MIT: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NDE: near-death experience
OBE: out-of-body experience
PK: psychokinesis (the ability to influence a physical system with intention)
PTSD: post-traumatic stress syndrome
QM: quantum mechanics
QP: quantum physics
RV: remote viewing
RNG: random number generator computer, also called random event generator

Definitions

Entanglement: A pair of particles are bonded so that they influence each other instantaneously from a distance.[23] Harald Walach* expanded this concept to a Generalized Entanglement model.

Panpsychism: everything material has individual consciousness, in opposition to the dualist belief that material and mind are separate, or the materialist belief in only the physical.

Parapsychology: The British referred to this as psychical research, the scientific study of the paranormal such as precognitive dreams, telepathy, mind influencing matter, etc.

Photon: a particle representing a quantum of light or other electromagnetic radiation.

Psi: A Greek letter used to refer to anomalous experiences, parapsychology and the paranormal. Dean Radin's list of psi categories is: Healing at a Distance, Mind-Matter Interaction (PK or psychokinesis), Physiological Correlations at a Distance, Precognition & Presentiment, Survival of Consciousness after Death, and Telepathy and ESP.[24]

Quantum mechanics/physics: The study of subatomic particles like photons and electrons. They don't follow the same rules of physics as the visible world.

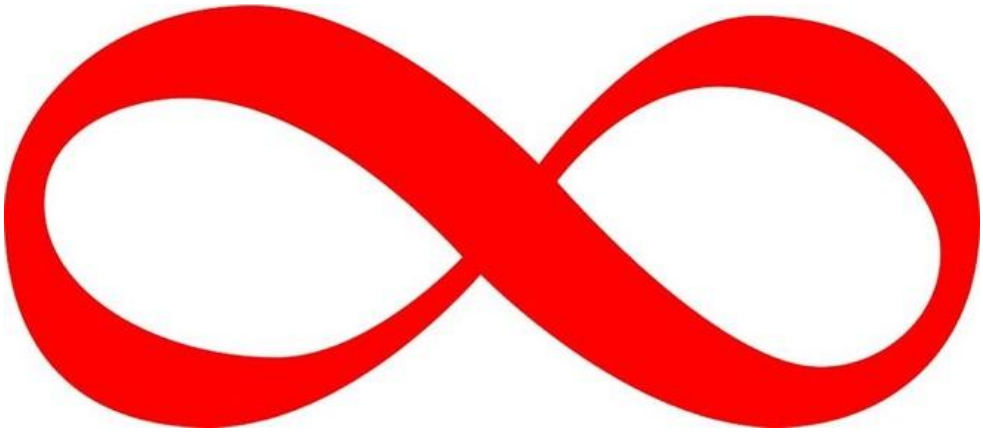
Non-locality: Action from a distance implying a universal connectivity.

Presentiment/precognition: Knowledge of a future event.

Synchronicity: Associated with Carl Jung, who defined it as, "meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved."

Section One

Learning from Other Dimensions in Dreams and Visions



Susan Blackmore, Ph.D.

A Skeptic's View of Consciousness

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

How does Dr. Blackmore explain her Out of Body Experience? Others' Near-Death Experiences?

She's a spiritual atheist who practices Zen Buddhist meditation. Explain.

She said that if Ian Stevenson's case studies of children who remember their past lives in places like India, Iran, and the US were true, "Everything we know about the world is wrong." Explain.

What is the social impact of religious and other memes?

You were born July 29, 1951, in London, which makes you a Leo. I know you're not a believer in astrology, but do you identify with any Leo traits? I did once upon a time read about that sort of thing and I think there were some characteristics that I had. I have done some research on astrology which just confirms some of my greatest fears which is that people bend themselves toward what they think they are supposed to be according to astrology. We know from hundreds of experiments that astrology can't predict which partners you'll get along with or what your life will be like or anything else. *Millions of Indians think otherwise and use astrology as an aid in choosing a marriage partner.* Even worse, I think they can mold their children. "Oh, he's going to be a little Leo so that means he'll be…." *It's true that if you tell teachers, "This group of children is brilliant and this one is just average," the ones the teacher thinks is brilliant will perform better.* Absolutely, exactly that.

What's your Myers-Briggs type? INTJ, but that sort of thing doesn't really interest me. In the classic extraversion-introversion test, I'm just weird because people always just assume from my behavior that I'm extrovert, yet I come out on the questionnaires to be an introvert. Questions like, "In the evening would you rather go out to a party and have fun or sit at your desk working?" I'd rather sit at my desk working. Why would I rather go to a party and waste time? I want to get on with my life.

What about your birth order? I'm asking because a "rebel scientist" study found people who are not conformists tended to be later-borns. I read that research too. I'm a first-born. *Like the majority of the visionary scientists.* I have a sister two and a half years younger and a brother eleven years younger.

What about your childhood led you to Oxford? Girls probably weren't in a large segment of the student population when you went. No, it was one to eight. It was fantastic. The downside was there were only three women's colleges and they were all-women but loads and loads of men's colleges. It was a year after I left that they changed that. I was the last person in Oxford to be rusticated, which means sent away from Oxford to the country for the rest of the term for being found with a man in my room. When my daughter went to Oxford, they were told they could only have two men in their room at a time. It's changed that much.

Your question about how I got there is very hard to say. My father was a well-to-do businessman. My dad didn't expect his wife to work so she was a housewife. I was sent to a vile awful boarding school, but I discovered there that I was bright, which was my way of coping with life when I thought all the other girls hated me. My way to survive was to work harder and become top in physics and chemistry, although at a girls' boarding school in the 1960s this does not make you popular. Nevertheless, it was the only thing that I could put my energies into, so I did well on my A levels.

At one point, I thought I wanted to be a doctor and my mom badly wanted me to be a doctor, but I had a realization in the middle of the night in my dormitory bed that I would be terrible as a doctor. It felt as if my whole future life was closing in on me—to be in hospitals with ill people all the time and I'd probably marry another doctor. I was in terrible trouble with my parents and the school and I had to change A level subjects, which I did.

My biology teacher said, "You love biology, I know. But don't study biology at university because biology is basically all done now." What an extraordinary thing to say! Of course in the 1950s the structure of DNA had been discovered but she couldn't have imagined where that would lead. So she said, "Why don't you do psychology?" I loved it. I stayed on an extra term and did the Oxbridge exams, which you had to do in those days, and I got to Oxford, which was wonderful. I loved it there and loved the work as well. That's where I had strange experiences and I ran the Oxford University Society for Psychical Research for three years.

Why was boarding school horrendous? A lot of people of my age, my husband included, have been harmed by their boarding schools. Sleeping in a room with four or five other girls with very strict rules, the bell went off at

6:50 and you had to get up, get dressed, strip the bed, and arrange your few things in a certain way. You had a dressing table where you were only allowed five things, one of which had to be a picture of your parents. You had to run 'round the outside of the whole school and then sit at your breakfast place at 7:30. You had to be in class all day with two hours of sports every afternoon. Lessons were until 7:00 PM, then supper and one hour of free time before bed. You were not allowed to take any books to your bedroom. After lunch, you changed from grey socks and skirt into white socks and a mauve dress in preparation for being a "lady."

We had no privacy and no fun, with weekends with absolutely nothing to do. I was constantly in trouble and considered naughty. Does that give you an idea of what it was like for six or seven years? *It sounds like a prison.* Oh, absolutely. *Young Indian women in university still have those kinds of restricted, medieval rules in their dormitories.* I sympathize.

In your first year at Oxford, one evening you were smoking hash, doing the Ouija board, sleep-deprived, and had an OBE that triggered your interest in paranormal parapsychology. Then, later you realized that it was caused by sleep deprivation and smoking hash. The Swiss neurosurgeon Olaf Blanke discovered it has to do with the right temporoparietal junction (TPJ) in the brain. What did you conclude over time that caused that mystical astral travel OBE? When you say later, we are talking 45 years later since the discovery of the TPJ was in 2002. That set off a slew of research on OBEs, which is fantastic.

Since I had that experience in 1970, the topic of OBEs has been fringe, even as far as parapsychology was concerned. Now, there are serious scientists working on it, which is why I wrote my 2019 book *Seeing Myself: The New Science of Out of Body Experiences.* All those decades in between I was floundering. I wrote a book in 1982 doing my best to try to understand, "Could it be natural or could it be a brain-based thing or does it really mean something has left the body?" When I was flying over the roofs of Oxford, when I looked the next day, what I had seen wasn't accurate, but those things didn't bother me at the time. I just thought the astral world is a bit different from the physical world.

When I descended down into an island with a hundred trees, I thought afterwards, well, you wouldn't count the trees. Then, I thought the astral world is full of thought-forms with this ambiguity and ambivalence. My book talked about how relaxation and cutting off input from the senses and

going into your own mind could conceivably lead you to adopt a bird's eye view, which is quite common in dreams. I did studies that showed that people who often dream in bird's eye view, more often have OBEs.

I've concluded that OBEs are nothing more than a disruption in the body's schema, the essential map that we all have of our own body, which is maintained by activity in the TPJ and connects with our memories and sense of self. Once we knew about this, from Blanke's work, everything fell into place. Every animal that moves needs a body schema. The brain is constantly tracking the head is here, the arms are here. It has to be kept in touch all the time with what you are seeing and what you are feeling ... *because otherwise you might fall down or collapse.* Yes, exactly. So, the body schema constantly interacts with sensory input. Then, you feel as if you are in your body. How could that go wrong? One possibility is cutting off the sensory input or a lack of oxygen in the brain and so on. This is how we come to have OBEs.

Your sensation of flying to New York during that experience was caused by an improper functioning of that part of the brain? Is it similar to what happens in dreams? It's similar to lucid dreams but it's not very similar to ordinary dreams. I think anyone who has lucid dreams, which is something like 40% of the population, will know that feeling when you become lucid and realize it is a dream. Then, you can see so clearly and everything becomes bright and vivid. Very often you can control the dream and say I'm going to turn that monster into a cuddly pussycat or whatever you like. You know that your brain is capable of producing wonderful, vivid, rich imagery including emotions and sounds. We know that some people are awake when they have OBEs. Some are on the verge of sleep, maybe stage one sleep. Many people are wide awake, as I was, sitting up and talking.

One of the things I've discovered from the recent research is that people who have a very hyperactive cortex—like me—are much more likely to have OBEs. I'm terribly sensitive to flashing patterns and noises, due to hyperactivity in the sensory cortex. If you get hyperactivity in the TPJ that disturbs the body schema, then you are more likely to have OBEs. Sleep deprivation and electrical stimulation with electrodes in the brain can cause that random activity. Cannabis can, too.

What happens is that the poor brain is trying to keep the body schema connected to all the input, but it can't, so it goes free-floating, no longer

connected to what it can see and feel. The OBE is the brain's attempt to get back to normal and usually, it succeeds very quickly. I was lucky enough during my OBE to have a friend who kept asking, "What can you see? Have you got a silver cord? Can you go to the astral realm?" So, I didn't get frightened but thought, "I'll find out," and that's why I think it was such a long and weird experience. *Kevin was reassuring you and grounding you.*

How is this different from psychedelic drugs, LSD or ketamine? Totally different. LSD is not a drug that any sensible person takes very often. Experts on it will take it once a year or so and I'm rather like that. It transforms everything but typically, you do not have OBEs. With LSD, mystical experiences are more common, of the kind that mine eventually turned into, a loss of self and feeling everything is one, but it is less common to have the sensation of being outside of your body.

Ketamine is a totally different story. I've only had ketamine once in order to find out whether I would have another OBE. You can imagine how keen I was to do so! Ketamine is an anesthetic, normally used for animals and only occasionally for children or elderly patients. The dose is critical and I was lucky enough to have someone inject a carefully judged and very high dose. I was lying on a waterbed with nice music and it was all very well organized. I've been lucky with my drug teachers and drug experiences. I've taken psychedelics seriously and not messed around stupidly with them.

Imagine this—everything is paralyzed except my eyes. It's really quite unpleasant but interesting. It seemed as if I was out of my body, but everything was bleary and weird but nothing like the clarity, immediacy, and feeling of being there in the OBE or in some lucid dreams. There's no drug shortcut to having an OBE. *It's interesting that Professor Michael Pollan, whom we know from his books about food, wrote* How to Change Your Mind *about the use of ketamine to work with anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems.* Yes, a wonderful book.

I smoke a little Cannabis almost every day, which leads to thinking about reality in different ways. I've had ayahuasca, DMT, LSD, and mescaline as part of my attempts to understand what this life is. I think deeply about questions of duality, nonduality, the nature of the universe, all these things that we've been talking about. In the evening I think about them in a different way than in the daytime and I like the alternation. I've had two wonderful opportunities to go on a two-week course that involved

four sessions of ayahuasca, which had been amazing. I've had DMT under other circumstances in two other different ways of taking it. I've had experience with classical psychedelics, all part of my attempts to understand what is reality.

What are the different mechanisms between sleep deprivation or a drug or an NDE? There are similarities and differences between all these things. I would love to see a map of altered states. Which ones are more similar? How can you get from an ordinary dream to a lucid dream and back and is it easier to get from there to sleep paralysis? *Some people think that the brain sets up filters that keep us in a rational mode. When those filters are disrupted by deprivation or drugs or whatever, it removes the filters which keep us from ordinarily accessing these mystical feelings of oneness.* In its classic form, Henri Bergson proposed that we would be overwhelmed without such a filter and Aldous Huxley took up a similar idea. Although the basic idea is very attractive, it does not seem to get much confirmation from all the neuroscience we are now learning.

As for those experiences of losing the sense of a separate self, we now know that the sense of self is a construction of the brain. As I mentioned, this is largely maintained by processes in the TPJ and its connections to parts of what is called the default mode network. It's scary to think that this powerful sense of being someone inside my head is just a useful construct of the brain, but that's what the evidence is telling us. Incidentally, I think this is what is meant by the doctrine of "no-self" or *anatta* in Buddhism: Self is an illusion. This does not mean that it does not exist but that it is not what it seems to be. In modern terms, it's a construction that helps us get around in the world.

I live life in an educated society thinking of myself as something inside here in control of the body. That fundamental basic mistake is propped up all the time by our language and social life—this in a sense could be thought of as one of those filters. If all your thinking and feeling time is about "me" in here and the world is out there, you become a dualist, thinking of mind and body as separate. Little kids become dualists very early. There is lots of research about how children talk about their bodies —"My brain helps me." "There's me and there's my brain." This kind of thinking is useful in our lives but it leads to this duality of mind and matter which is the root of illusion and suffering.

This also leads to the "hard problem" of consciousness, which is how can an objective, physical brain be responsible for this subjective, private experience? This is a massive problem for consciousness studies and for physics in some ways. It's the sense of self that leads to that problem. Dropping the sense of self, letting go of that duality, is easily said but you can't just drop it by saying so. It takes time and practice. I have been training in Zen meditation for 40 years and in deep meditation, this sense of separation disappears. I've had enough mystical experiences in my life to know how it feels when it goes away, but even then I can't really make intellectual sense of it. As they say, these experiences are ineffable. Nevertheless, it encourages me to think that ultimately we will have some non-dual understanding of the universe, which we don't have at the moment. Going back to your filter question, I think it's the sense of self and the natural belief in dualism that is the main obstacle rather than some little filters in the brain that are stopping us for some reason.

A non-dual understanding would be simply materialist? No, not for me. René Descartes, in the 17th century, thought there were two kinds of stuff, mind and matter, and that they are separate. That is classic dualism. In contrast is monism, meaning there is only one kind of stuff in the universe. Everything is basically one. But what is this one stuff? The most popular view in current science is materialism—it's all matter—but it's not the only view. There's idealism and many others. People accuse me of being a materialist, but I'm not a materialist. I don't know what matter is. Is it really atoms and molecules? Physics does a fantastic job of understanding and predicting and that's how we get all our technology. But at the deepest level, it gets into big troubles.

An alternative is idealism, saying that everything is mind or that consciousness or extended mind came first. But then you can't account for matter; for example, for why we can agree about the cup of tea I'm holding. If it's all mind, how does the physical world appear logically and you can do experiments and get consistent results? You can't explain that with idealism. I would say both of those approaches are in deep trouble: I don't think that anybody has got the answer, which makes it a fascinating time to be studying these phenomena.

As someone who practiced Zen, what would a Zen Buddhist monk say about idealism vs. materialism? It's all illusion, right? I don't know what a Buddhist monk would say. I practice Zen, yes, but I'm not a Buddhist. What

I love about Zen is it's taking the harshest instructions of the Buddha, sit down, stare at a blank wall and watch your own mind and work it out for yourself. That's a long job. What really interests me is what happens when you keep on practicing mindfulness and you sit every day, which I've done for around 35 years. As in so many religions, Buddhism didn't start out a religion. It was hundreds of years after the Buddha gave his famous discourses that they were written down. There's not just one view.

What brings Zen practitioners together is that they like sitting, meditating, and learning about their own minds—studying the self to lose the self. We haven't spoken much about my spiritual endeavors, it's nothing to do with spirits, souls, and life after death; it has to do with transforming the self and recognizing that it's impermanent.

Do you work with koans *or do you just try to keep your mind still?* Yes, I've done a lot of different things, described in my book *Zen and the Art of Consciousness* about ten koans. Most of the chapters are koans that I practiced with on formal koan retreats. You have a week to work on a question like "When is this?" or "What am I doing?" My normal everyday practice is zazen, a form of open meditation, sitting where I can hear the birds and I can feel the cushion. You need a still mind whether you do this or alternatively, concentrative meditation. Either way, it's all about attention.

One of the koans I worked with, "There is no time, what is memory?" is a fantastic one. My first approach to that was, "If I believe there is no time, that means blah blah blah and then, what is memory? Now I'll say I don't believe there is no time, blah blah blah." This leads to a tree of possibilities from intense intellectualizing. Many teachers forbid this kind of thinking but my teacher said, "Don't worry. That's just what we Westerners do. It will wear itself out," which of course it does. You spend a couple of days thinking, "It could be this or it could be…" but those thoughts are coming up in an increasingly still mind and you can see them. After a while, the question takes on a very different feel and becomes an unspoken longing to understand something about time and memory, and it all comes back to "Who am I?"

Apart from Zen, which is my main practice, I've done training in other traditions, such as *Mahamudra,* a deep practice in Tibetan Buddhism, and in the *jhanas* which are a series of altered states of consciousness that can be reached through deep concentrative meditation—quite a different

approach from zazen. The jhanas are in the early Buddhist scriptures, as taught by Leigh Brasington in his book*, Right Concentration*. He believes that this kind of concentration induces a self-induced dopamine rush similar to kundalini, which can take you to different states and insights. *Is the implication that logic and mind are very limited and we need to get to something beyond logic?* It's not like the filters you were talking about. We can do wonderful things with logic and we need it. It's very interesting to use a logical approach to a question, but It's not the only approach.

Meditation teaches you to take a different approach, which requires a lot of practice. Minds are capable of all kinds of different things: one is logical thinking, another is dreaming and fantasizing, another is being still with some sense of observing stillness and then these interesting questions come again like "Who am I?"

You mentioned the deep mind or underlying mind. How is that different from our prefrontal cortex? I think of this as being our logic and judgment, so are you saying we want to get past that to something deeper or more true? I think our knowledge of the brain at the moment is just beginning. Our frontal lobes, which have expanded in human evolution far more than in other great apes, contain a lot of control mechanisms—because you can't have a clever brain as complex as ours without lots and lots of different bits and they aren't just one great brain. Lots of bits of the brain are keeping control of other parts and processes. If I want to think through an argument, there's got to be another part of the brain saying don't think about that when you need to be thinking about this. This is attention, which is a brain-wide mechanism and much argued about in neuroscience as well as being at the heart of meditation and mystical experiences.

My own morning meditation every day is training the brain to do less. There is not a need for this bit to control this bit, and this bit to control this bit…it settles down and there is much more integration. At the sound of the bird I don't think, "Oh, it's a blackbird. I wonder where it is?" The sound is a sound and everything is more integrated. Stillness is like that. All these bits have got to be cooperating, helping each other, suppressing each other, and so on. Neuroscience is discovering things, but I think we need to be a bit careful not to blame just one part, such as the prefrontal cortex.

Where do the jhanas originate? They're in the early Buddha sutras but very few Buddhist traditions actually advocate them; according to the teacher that I began working with, Leigh Brasington; what you're doing is a

self-induced dopamine rush. What you're doing in the first jhana, you have to go through lots of processes first, but you invoke this energy called *piti* that is a kind of rushing, possibly similar to the kundalini although we don't know for sure. You invoke this and you use its joyful and lovely power to take you into different states. I don't think it is for me, but it can be addictive. It's been very much rejected in many Buddhist traditions but it's fascinating to me. So that's one kind of meditation I do less often than my standard Zen sitting meditation.

You've described yourself as an atheist, but you sound more like an agnostic. No, I'm an absolute 100% atheist. There are so many gods. I was brought up a Christian so I know the Christian god is supposed to have created us in his own image. That is blatantly false. We know how we evolved in amazing detail because you can look at DNA evidence and see where our ancestors came out of Africa and when the Denisovans split from the Neanderthals. That makes me an absolute atheist but I have a spiritual practice and I have mystical experiences. That's not incompatible with being a monist. Somehow we need to understand all this within the scope of it all being one stuff.

The Transcendentalists and the Theosophists don't see God as a human form but as an intelligence or a universal love. Some people use consciousness as a word for that kind of idea of a universal love or oneness. Yes, I have a lot more sympathy with those kinds of ideas or at least some of them. I studied Theosophy in great detail when I was younger and I went along to the Theosophical Society in Bristol. I even gave lectures to the Theosophists and learned about thought forms, the seven layers of the energy fields, etc. I go into some of this in the *Seeing Myself* book. When somebody says there are seven levels such as the causal, etheric level where the etheric is supposed to pass energy to the astral, but there are no experiments to find out if it's true. If you go to what is sometimes called "Einstein's God" as the basis of everything or the entirety of love, you're not making any testable claims.

You've been doing research on NDEs. How do you explain Eben Alexander's experiences?*[25] *They are very similar to Robert Monroe who found himself astral traveling and developed technology so other people could do it. What do you think is going on there with the very concrete memories Alexander had even though his brain was "pus."* He made claims, which as I understand it, have been refuted. His experience was like mine in

some ways. There were other worlds, other entities, and a girl with butterfly wings, but this is just the kind of thing brains bring up. And was his brain really "pus"?

Lots of the arguments about NDEs revolve around when the experience happened. In many cases, there are claims that the experience happened when the person was unconscious, but actually, we don't know the timing and this is important. Some claim that people saw veridical things at the time the brain was flatlined, but there is not a single case which, in my opinion (and I have done a lot of research on it), confirms that. What we need, if we're going to say that any of these experiences happened when the brain couldn't be doing its normal thing with the TPJ and the dream capacity and all that, is the timing.

The best attempt to test this was the famous AWARE study by Peter Fenwick* and Sam Parnia. In multiple hospitals, they put targets above the beds in cardiac units with apparatus measuring the patient's state. If anyone had had an OBE and reported what was up there on the ceiling, this would be excellent evidence. None of the patients did. [*Dr. Fenwick replied that Parnia did other studies that were more successful and referred to an article in* Integral Transpersonal Journal *in 2019.*[26]]

Eben Alexander was in a coma on life support. Are you suggesting that in fact, his brain really was functioning enough to retain memory and to remember what his visions were? At some point, yes. He only wrote them down and talked about them when he was capable of speaking again. The girl with the butterfly wings, when did she happen? Did that experience with her happen in the depths of the coma or did it happen as he was going into the coma? You know what it's like going to sleep when you have these weird things going on. If you're paying attention you can enjoy watching the sleep process mindfully. It could have happened then or it could have happened in the in-between state coming back. It could have happened at the end afterwards. That's what we don't know and need to find out

You're saying people who have these kinds of NDEs weren't dead, that there was enough life that they could have these kinds of visions? Absolutely, we have no good evidence that they were dead. In all of the decades I've been interested in this there are just a few of these very famous cases which seem on the surface to prove that somebody saw something that they couldn't have known about when their brain was not active, but all of them have really serious problems when you actually get into the detail. I

wrote about them in *Seeing Myself,* and in my earlier book, *Dying to Live*, because I am fascinated by it. In the typical NDE and OBE, people see all kinds of things that can't possibly be checked because they're dream-like—like the various, totally different "heavens" that people report. These experiences are much more vivid and realistic than dreams, but only rarely are there details that can be checked and even more rarely are there details that prove correct. Huge weight is put on these very few cases and yet, in every case, when properly investigated the evidence crumbles to nothing.

I suppose what upsets me about this is that people so want it to be true. They hope they're going to survive after death and this will make their life worth living and things will be put right in heaven. So people distort the evidence, write books endlessly and call it "spiritual." But what really does "spiritual" mean? Not, I would say, that we have a soul or spirit—that's just fantasy. The very thing that the Buddha said was that self is like everything else, it's impermanent. The idea of *anatta,* as I understand it, is that the self is temporary, coming and going, rising and falling away. It's not a permanent being that can survive the death of the body.

About Robert Monroe, I've tried his techniques. None of them really work for me. I know people who have been to the Monroe Institute. The evidence coming out of the Institute is that it works for a few people but not many. If you do the right things to your brain, you can have an OBE. To my mind, nothing leaves the body in an OBE. It's important to remember that an OBE is defined as the experience of seeming to be outside of our body. it's been almost 50 years since I had the experience. They have similar hallucinations. If you go back in the OBE literature in the last century, Hereward Carrington was a very famous psychical researcher who was approached by Sylvan Muldoon who said, "You're wrong Mr. Carrington," and they wrote two wonderful books (*The Projection of the Astral Body* and *The Phenomena of Astral Projection*) and collected many more experiences long before the spiritualists and the Theosophists.

Astral projection theory comes from the Theosophist Madame Blavatsky who traveled in India towards the end of the 19th century. I've read all her famous books. They talk about these astral levels, which suggests to me that there is something really going on in the similarity in our brains that produces these levels. Some call them the astral, the etheric, the causal, the mental, all the different bodies which inhabit the different levels but they're all rather similar.

Ayahuasca is a very interesting drug that produces some of these same images. Muldoon and Carrington talk about the three astral traveling speeds; I think those are very precisely the speeds in which we can move in our imagination, as I've written about in my book. When all my love of the astral projection theory was beginning to crumble, I came to see this in a slightly different way. When we find out how our brains actually work, that's great.

All the astral travel and mystical experiences can be explained by brain functioning? At the moment, no. If you seem to be out of your body, it's an OBE, whereas with astral projection you're implying that something has actually gone out of the body. So having the OBE is a neutral definition, not committed to a particular theory. We can explain the OBE because we know where it's produced and about distortions of the body schema and so on. We can explain the NDE tunnel experience and the life review. In fact, all of those parts of the NDE to a greater or lesser extent are falling into place now. When we come to mystical experiences I think it's much harder. We know that a certain part of the temporal lobe is involved in many different types of mystical experiences but there aren't enough scientists out there who care to research. There are becoming more.

Some Buddhists do believe in reincarnation which implies a permanent soul. I think, "How can you?" If you sit and meditate and come to see even a little bit of what the Buddha was talking about, it doesn't make any sense. But again, people want "me, me, me" to go on. They also want good people to be rewarded and bad people to be punished. The idea of reincarnation is very tempting from that point of view. It comes down to, as all the memes of all religions come down to (more the monotheistic ones, but in Buddhism too), allowing the men to control the women. It allows the powerful men to control everybody. If you disobey my laws and don't do the right thing, you'll be reincarnated as a lower being. It's all the horrible memes of those ideas which thrive on our natural human tendency to believe in a permanent self inside. It's such a strong story that brains tell themselves.

What about Ian Stevenson's thousands of accounts of children's past-life memories that checked out. "I was in this village in India and my people were shoemakers…" Where do you think that comes from? That is very interesting. I don't have firsthand knowledge of it. I would say that Stevenson himself didn't speak any of the Indian languages that people

were speaking in the places he went to so he relied on local translators. Can you imagine in the period when he was working (‘60s, early ‘70s, I guess) [*he died in 2007*] what it was like in an Indian village when somebody comes along in a car, in villages where they never perhaps have seen such a thing? Your story is going to be told and somebody puts a tape recorder in front of you with the incentive to tell wonderful convincing stories. Little kids are so brilliant at telling stories. There would be people coming and going from other villages and there would be stories about people in other villages. I can’t give you a definitive answer about it but those are the things I would take as a starting point to investigate and find out.

If any of these things are true, wow! Everything we know about the world is kind of wrong. We need to rethink everything. It would totally transform, certainly, our understanding of the brain, the mind, and the human body—but also the understanding of the physical world. That’s what kept me going for such a long time of slogging away and endlessly “Maybe this works and no, that one doesn’t work.” Well, maybe this does. I’ll just try one more,” because it would be important if true.

How does your work with evolutionary memes fit in? The term meme was invented by Richard Dawkins in his famous book *The Selfish Gene.* The purpose of the book was to show that in biology it’s about the competition between genes to get copied and passed into the next generation in Darwinian evolution. The evolutionary algorithm is to take anything you like and copy it ten times with slight variations. Kill nine of them off and only copy one of them and do the same thing again. Keep on copying, varying, selecting. This is how we humans, every other animal, and plant evolved. The point Dawkins was making is that this algorithm is not peculiar to genes but would apply to any kind of information that is copied with variation and selection. They are all another replica, not genes, not DNA, but information copied with variation and selection.

A meme is any information that is copied from person to person. You can see this in the operation of internet memes where probably billions of pictures of cats and little videos are uploaded every day. Most of those variants nobody bothers with and only one or two gets through. That’s the basic idea of memes. I think the idea of the self is encouraged by all the memes that contribute to building up the idea that this self is a permanent thing inside a body. I think the memes are part of what makes the illusion of self.

Religious memes are God, creator, patriarchy… Virgin birth, the stories told in the Koran, the Bible and the Talmud, and ideas passed on from person to person. One that thrives is the power of men over women. The biology of sex differences is that for a man to pass on his genes, he should have intercourse with as many women as possible and let them look after the babies. For a woman, you can only have so many babies and look after them, so you need to find a man who will actually stay and look after them. Mechanisms like chastity belts and burkas enable that basic genetic mechanism for men to maintain sexual control over women. Those memes are the most vile part of many religions. It's a trick of religions to say if you believe this you are a good person and the unbelievers are bad.

Some say it's cultural relativity and we have to be understanding of different cultures so it's okay to mutilate baby girls.…and boys, although less. Yes, indeed there is that whole mechanism looking at them from a memetic perspective that rests on the biological basis. It's not that I have a deep understanding of right and wrong or what is good and bad, which are really hard philosophical difficulties. But when it comes to something like FGM that you mentioned, I don't think it's really difficult at all. That is pain for a lifetime, it's abuse, and not hard to say, "Get rid of this." *Female genital mutilation is an example of a religious meme? "We have to make girls clean."* Yes, absolutely. *And the belief in the US that toilet rolls were scarce during the pandemic of 2020*.

You've written books about consciousness while most people struggle to define it. I'm in this lovely room with a view of the river and the fields outside. I think I am conscious of it but as soon as I say that, I've fallen into dualism: "I'm in here sand there's a world out there and they're separate. This is mind and subjective experience but there's a real physical world." We know this doesn't work. Many mystics, meditators, and other such people, myself included, have experiences of non-duality where that goes away and it's quite clear that everything is one. The weird thing is when you are in that state, who's in it? It doesn't enable you to conclude, "Ah, now I've experienced non-duality, so now I can solve the hard problem of consciousness."

In a way, I'm following the footsteps of people like Dan Dennett, Nick Humphrey, and Michael Graziano (the latter is more recent than me), who are the so-called illusionists, in saying that consciousness is an illusion. What I mean by illusion is not that it doesn't exist, but we systematically

get it wrong when we think we have to explain it as do many neuroscientists, philosophers, and psychologists in Consciousness Studies; many of them think we have to explain how the brain gives rise to consciousness. That's already dualism in that there's a brain, a physical thing, giving rise to this subjective thing. So that seems to be wrong. I think many of the standard descriptions: the stream of consciousness, the emergence of consciousness, the rising of consciousness, the power of consciousness, come out of that deluded way of thinking about ourselves and the world. I, therefore, reject the search for the neural correlates of consciousness because it isn't a separate thing that you can find the correlates of.

I do not claim to have a theory of consciousness or to have solved the hard problem. I'm tempted by various types of panpsychism, the idea that everything is conscious but in most forms, it doesn't really work. If you are a bacterium or a single cell going, "That's the outside, this is the inside. Push away that chemical. Go towards this," that's what we're all we're doing but we're so much more complicated. Let's drop thinking about, "I've got free will. I've got this thing called consciousness"— that's about as far as where I stand on consciousness.

There's no duality because there's not something that's separate from us? You look to memes as ways that we understand ourselves but they're also just stories and illusion? Yes. I think that fundamentally our brains tell a story about a self who is in here looking out through the eyes and in control of the arms and legs. Everything is changed when you have words. Memes are any information copied from person to person and words are the absolute prime kind of memes. Our culture is very much based on language and on those word memes. All these memes that we get growing up, particularly things that we love or hate, either grab or push away, cling to or reject, start to build up a very complicated story that becomes very hard to see through in our ordinary lives, rushing about wanting things. That's the way in which I think that the memes build up a self. The memes are selfish replicators like genes are and they cling onto the self. They make the self an even more clingy thing that thinks it's so important. That's the way in which I think memes can contribute to consciousness.

Is the Donald Trump baby blimp that floated over London in protests a meme? It's an absolutely brilliant meme. I wrote my book *The Meme Machine* just over 20 years ago when I kind of believed that as the memetic

evolution speeded up it would keep progressing. Instead what I've seen is the coming back of anti-abortion; I thought the woman's right to choose would always be going forward but in many parts of the world people think that women are just bodies to be had by men. This shows the power of the memes that thrive on old-fashioned beliefs that men have power over women, particularly over reproduction. I realize now that the competition between freedom, openness, and oppression by powerful people will probably go on as long as there are people.

So memes are kind of puzzle pieces that define how we think and as such are part of consciousness. Bottom line, does this mean that there is no duality because it's all material? Not for me but materialists would say so because we know an awful lot about what looks like the material base. So if I look at a pen, it looks like a material object. I can drop it and draw with it. But that doesn't solve the hard problem of consciousness since you hit the problem of dualism hence "The Hard Problem."

I've had wonderful conversations with Deepak Chopra who is one of the people who believes in mind beyond the brain; they say simply get the problem the other way around. They say consciousness first, everything's consciousness. But why does there seem to be a material world? Why can you and I agree that we are having a Skype call with a computer? If it was just this experience, there wouldn't be any explanation of why you and I can speak to each other. There has to be some medium. But what is it? If I say it's matter, I'm stumped, if I say it's mind, I'm stumped. That's why I would say I'm a neutral monist. I seek for nonduality, yet I don't know how we're going to find it.

I suspect that one day the problems we have understanding consciousness from the perspective of psychological neuroscience and the problems physicists have of not being able to bring together the fundamental theories in a unified theory, may come together in some way and we'll solve it. But we haven't, which is why I'm not a materialist or an idealist. I'm a neutral monist. All that means is I'm not dualist: It's a bit like being an atheist. I refuse to be a materialist or an idealist because they don't work, so I'm some kind of monist. I think there's only one kind of stuff in the universe and we're all part of it, but I haven't a clue what it is and how it works. It's a wonderful way to spend a life, searching to try and find out.

I mentioned the contribution of memes to consciousness and that it relates to the false story that this body and brain are building up that there is

somebody in here. You can get to this from two directions. In my life, these two directions have come together with neuroscience, which is beginning to show, in enormous detail, how our self-concept is constructed largely in the TPJ, with inputs from other parts of the brain and the default mode network.[27] From the other direction, personal experience in mediation, in spontaneous mystical experiences and so on, indicates a much more fluid sense in which self is not separate from other.

The strong implication is that the self is not a continuing entity. The way I interpret Buddhist teaching is what's sometimes called moment-to-moment rebirth since there's nothing there that could be reincarnated. The Buddha taught the principle of *Anatta* (non-self) 2,500 years ago, meaning the self is not a permanent or continuous thing. Every time I think about myself, I make a false assumption that it's the same me that was a moment ago making a cup of tea. Rather, the view coming from both neuroscience and mystical experience says, "Selves are just ephemeral things that pop up and go away. Just stories, impermanent like everything else." Then, of course, there's nothing to be reincarnated. You have to let go of all that craving for continuing forever which goes along with the false view of what we are.

By saying I don't think materialism is true, I don't think we can do the whole job of understanding subjective experience and objective worlds by only taking one half. We know if you put a certain drug into the brain, if I had a tab of LSD now, certain things would happen and we would be able to see in a scanner what's happening. My consciousness would be utterly transformed, possibly dropping into nonduality and out again, possibly not. We can see how the self is constructed in different parts of the brain, bringing them all together into a network that seems to be "selfing" all the time. I have to work with talking about a material world in order to be a scientist while constantly holding in my mind that deeper down are these mysteries about the nature of experience and the world.

What does it mean that you're said to be a psi inhibitor? That goes back a long way. When I first became completely convinced of the validity of telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, etc., I started to do experiments. That's when I gave up any chance of a sensible academic career. My first few experiments gave positive results, but with help from others showing that I'd used the wrong statistical assumptions and made small errors when I typed those things up, the effects disappeared and I never again found any

results. Now some parapsychologists, in particular Rick Burger, said, “It’s because you’re a psi-inhibitor experimenter.” He wrote a paper accusing me of changing my data to pretend there weren’t any effects. I said, “Why would I want to do that? I’d given up a sensible Ph.D. at a great university in order to fund myself to do a Ph.D. at the University of Surrey because I was so committed to believing in this stuff.”

There was a famous experiment back in the ‘50s by Donald West, who is still alive in his 90s, that showed there was a difference between the results gotten by two experimenters. Richard Wiseman has tried the same experiment with Marilyn Schlitz with very iffy tricky results. There’s methodological progress in parapsychology with much better methods but there’s no theoretical progress. If it were true that there was such a thing as a psi inhibitor or a psi-positive experimenter, we should be able to work out why and therefore to make experimental tests that would show us how it works. Then we’d have better theories and we’d do more scientific experiments, but I haven’t seen it happen in fifty years.

What does your book, Test Your Psychic Powers, *written with your husband Adam Hart Davis in 1995, teach us?* That was a fun book. By the time that we wrote that book, I had done so many experiments and I was deeply involved in all sorts of psychic phenomena and claims. I realized the most fundamental scientific point is doing experiments for yourself really makes a difference. It pushes you forward in your own understanding of the world and the questions you want to ask. We wanted to give people some very simple experiments they could do themselves. For example, a certain type of crystal with the right vibration might make your flowers last longer in vases, divided into half with crystals and half without. Another experiment is to put razor blades in a pyramid and compare their sharpness with ones put in a different shape. Seeing the results will impress you far more than me saying crystals don’t work. The absolute purpose behind that book was to give people that fun and the disappointment that you learn from.

What about your more recent book, Seeing Myself: The New Science of Out of Body Experiences *in 2017?* That’s kind of my great life’s work, which has not been read very much. People think, “Why are you writing about OBEs again after all this time?” An OBE set me off on this path in the first place and I’ve meandered off into consciousness and memes and all over the place ever since. In 1982, my first book on OBEs was published,

called *Beyond Body*, and I did my absolute best in that book to understand how it could be possible that you could have an OBE. As people who have NDEs say, it's more vivid than anything in ordinary life. Yet the things I saw were not true when I looked at the places the next day. The psychology we had back in the late '70s and early '80s wasn't really up to explaining it. But with the advent of neuroscience and brain scans, we now know from various brilliant experiments that a certain spot in the TPJ, if you stimulate it, it'll produce an OBE, an absolutely critical finding.

With the recent discovery of the default mode network, one of the crucial jobs that it's doing is constructing the body's schema, this conscious illusory self that this body needs to keep track of itself. Birds and cats, and everything else, have it because any creature that moves needs constantly to have a body schema. If you disrupt that, what's going to happen? It splits, so you've got a free-floating body schema. Even people born without limbs have a complete body schema in their heads, so the brain keeps on doing that. You start to imagine moving or get the sensation of the tunnel in the NDE because of what's happening in the visual cortex.

At last, fifty years after I had that amazing experience, which is still so vivid in my mind, I can understand it. This is the difference between science making progress by asking difficult questions and devising tests and theories of astral projection, life beyond, Mind-at-Large, not leading to any new research. The belief that self is continuous and will live after death is just a story. I want my beliefs to be compatible with the best science I can find. These are really scary thoughts: "I don't really exist, not in the way that I thought. I'm just a story. I'm going to stop. When I go to bed tonight it'll be a different me who wakes up tomorrow." But if you actually go with them, they turn out actually to be very freeing and it actually makes it easier if you get in the hang of it. I am very grateful that I went through the process of having that dramatic OBE, becoming a complete believer and then through evidence and my own experiments finding I was wrong. Having been forced to do that in my mid-20s, it became easier to say, "Wrong again. Start again," because that's how we learn.

I have a friend in Germany who's beginning a big project on pure consciousness in pure silence, without awareness of anything, which means some theories of consciousness are impossible because there's only what the contents are. He's among a few great people in consciousness studies now who are actively looking into these experiences. My great hope is that

the new work will lead us towards theories that will enable us to escape from duality and have some kind of nondual theory but we're a long way from that.

Jessica Utts, who did the statistical work for remote viewers, said that in an ESP experience chance will be a 25% hit rate but the average is 27%. In Ganzfeld studies, she sees more like a 33% hit rate. So across the board, the psi research gets small but statistically significant results that can't be explained by chance. Why are they beyond chance?* That 33% is very rare; that's not what comes up in the meta-analysis. It's more often more like that 27%. It can be statistical errors, it can be the file drawer problem where you only publish the positive results, and publication bias. It can be flaws in the experimental design or fraud.

I can tell you a story that was very important to me about the Ganzfeld in 1979. I was doing my Ph.D. in parapsychology, doing Ganzfeld experiments because that had become the great thing in those days. I had a friend at Cambridge University, Carl Sargent, who was doing Ganzfeld experiments getting 33% instead of 25%. A friend in the Society for Psychical Research said, "There's something you're doing wrong in the experiments. Maybe you don't have the right empathy with the people. Why don't you go to Carl Sargent's lab and learn from him how to get results?" SPR gave me a small grant to go to Cambridge so we would do the same experiment and compare the results.

The first day in his lab was amazing. We did three Ganzfelds in a soundproof room with a nice comfy bed, the right headphones with white noise, etc. After the subjects in the Ganzfeld were there for half an hour talking about the impressions they've had, they go with the experimenter into a room, looking at four pictures. Not only did they pick the right picture but the items that they picked up on seemed really impressive. I could see how well designed the experiment looked and the statistics are very straightforward in that experiment. They used a very complicated randomization procedure and they isolated the subject from the experimenter in a different building.

I came to the conclusion that either this is psi and I've got to go give up all my skepticism or it's fraud. I recorded in detail everything that was going on and I began to focus on the randomization procedure because they had a little pile of 20 envelopes that were supposed to have 5 A's, 5 B's, 5 C's and 5 D's to pick one at random to tell the sender which picture to look

at. It occurred to me that when you've done that you've only got 19 left. So if you've only got 19 left you've got to put that in the right one that you've just taken out. So somewhere you have another little envelope that you know what's in them. A way of cheating would be to instead of taking one of these envelopes like you're supposed to do, it turned out there were four drawers with A B C's ready for replacement. You take one of those instead and chuck one of these away.

Lo and behold, a couple of days later, like Sherlock Holmes, I put little hairs in the drawers to see which drawers were opened, check the dustbins to find out whether they'd thrown one away as I would predict, count the number of envelopes, and ultimately open the whole 20 pack to see whether it was actually where it was supposed to be or whether by this proposed cheating method it would have become unbalanced.

There was a really scary session in which Carl himself shouldn't have been involved in the randomization but he said to the main experimenter, "I've done the randomization for you because I know you're in a hurry." Then he came into the session at the end when we were doing the judging so, potentially, he could've known if he'd used that method which was the right method. I have in my notes, "Carl seems to be pushing the subject towards B" and B was the answer. I went and looked and the drawers had indeed been opened as I had predicted. When I confronted them and we opened the pack it was indeed unbalanced. If you've been showing one session that it was cheating, I think you have to reject all the data. It was so awful because I couldn't believe that somebody would do that even though he had said to me in the past things like, "It's obviously true and a little bit of cheating here and there doesn't matter because it's obviously true."

The worst thing that happened since, which is really upsetting, is the meta-analysis of the Ganzfeld experiment. The famous social psychologist Daryl Bem got into all this much later after early meta-analysis by Charles Honorton back in 1985. Carl's data appears in that meta-analysis and nothing is said about it in Bem's paper. I wrote to the journal in which this meta-analysis was published and pointed out that you have to do a "flaw analysis." You draw a graph to see how many flaws you can find in the experiment in the way it's designed, the way it's carried out, and you relate that to the effect size. Obviously the more flaws there are, the bigger the effects due to the flaws. A flaw analysis that shows no relationship between

the number of flaws and the effect size would say, “Flaws can’t account for it.”

They should have thrown out Carl Sargent’s data because I can show that the randomization procedure was faulty because if it can be opened to cheating like that it’s not a good procedure. So I redid the meta-analysis of the statistics with all Sargent’s data counted as flawed for randomization and then the flaw analysis shows a positive correlation between the number of flaws and the effect size. I sent this to the journal and they said they were going to publish it but they never did. That really is all I need to tell you about my despair in parapsychology—it’s so depressing.

Roger Nelson, researcher for the PEAR project at Princeton said, “We’ve been trying to tear it apart but there’s always a persistent small but real effect in terms of people’s ability to influence the RNGs and they can even influence it after the data’s already been collected if they haven’t read it.”* A long time ago I was asked to debate with Dean Radin over one of these RNG experiments and they sent me this wonderful graph that showed this effect. I spent a long time redoing the analysis and found that it didn’t add up at all. Parapsychologists are going to come up with a theory that enables you to do better experiments that actually push forward the theory. At the moment there is no decent theory of psi and the experiments just go on and on producing these tiny little effects which may or may not be psi, may or may not be errors, fishing for data, etc.

William Bengston has done experiments curing mice injected with lethal breast cancer cells and he gets an 89% cure rate for the mice. Do you think it could be simply that human thought and intention do have an effect so it’s nothing spooky? It would be very spooky if it happened at a distance. *It does.* I very much doubt that it happened. I hope I’ve given you enough of a gist of how difficult the field is.

I’m interested in organizations that are doing this kind of skeptical research. You’ve mentioned in your writings the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, the Skeptical Inquirer Journal*, and the European Skeptics Congress. Who do you look to for as to who is doing the cutting edge research?* In 2018, I went to two wonderful skeptics’ conferences which I very much enjoyed—the Annual Conference of the Australian Skeptics and one in Las Vegas, organized by the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. If we go back a long time the main proponents on the skeptic side were the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. I

think I'm the only person ever who's been simultaneously on the board of CSICOP and on the board of the Society for Psychical Research in London. For many years I was juggling these approaches.

Are you working on a new book? I've got a lot of thoughts about memes, about the way our culture is going with the kind of memes that get into our heads, and the good and the harm that they do. If you treat memes as a second replicator, with genes as the first replicator, I think we are in the process of letting loose a third replicator which is all the digital stuff out there in the cloud, which I think is evolving in its own way and will result in artificial intelligence that is self-evolved rather than the sort that we create and put in a robot or something.

What do you do for fun? How do you balance all of this thinking? Regarding the things I do for pleasure, which isn't always quite the same as fun, gardening is a huge one. We have seven acres of which about an acre and a half is a garden, which is ridiculous and too hard work, but I love it and grow most of our vegetables. We've got chickens and their eggs. We have a river running all along our land. I go hiking and kayaking with my sister. We're not very far from the sea where I keep a kayak down on the beach. I play snare drum in a samba band which I absolutely love. I rarely go out in the evening apart from samba practice. I really find music problematic. It overwhelms me, it makes me emotional. I can love listening to wonderful music for two or three minutes and then I can't take it anymore. I don't watch television.

Work usually comes first although I'm 67 and I keep telling myself, "You don't have to work all the time. You've got your old-age pension." In a way, the work is fun. I wouldn't keep doing it if it wasn't fun to discover about the nature of the universe. Meditation isn't fun but it's a pleasure. I meditate every day and have done so for decades. I explore different kinds of meditation when I have the chance with a different teacher. I spend a lot of time lying in bed gazing at the ceiling and thinking about the meaning of it all, the nature of the universe, consciousness and memes. That in itself is a pleasure.

In the face of growing inequality, an increasing number of autocrats, climate change, with maybe a decade to turn it around, do you consider yourself an optimist or a pessimist about our survival? I think humans will survive in one form or another, but the survival of our civilization I am very pessimistic about. I think we're heading for disaster, such as with the

increase in methane in the atmosphere because methane is a much more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and could swamp any efforts we make to reduce our carbon output. My husband and I moved here more than 10 years ago thinking, "We've got a river and I'm going to get even better at growing veggies and learning how to live on the grounds if we end up without electricity and having to fend for ourselves."

I wrote a little children's book that hasn't been published about children having fun when all the adults are dead and they're trying to survive, which I think actually would be hell. Our civilization now depends on electricity and power and depends more and more and more on digital infrastructure. What is money if we don't have electricity? I'm pretty damn pessimistic but what do you do with that pessimism? I try to keep my carbon footprint down. Flying is the worst thing that I'm doing to the planet. At home we keep our house pretty cold, we have solar panels all over the place, we have solar hot water heating and we eat very simple food, most of which we grow ourselves.

Books

Consciousness: An Introduction, 3rd ed. (with E. Trosciank), 2018
Seeing Myself: The New Science of Out-of-Body Experiences, 2018
Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction, 2017
Zen and the Art of Consciousness, 2011
Ten Zen Questions, 2009
Conversations on Consciousness, 2005
The Meme Machine, 1999
Test Your Psychic Powers, (with Adam Hart-Davis), 1995
Dying to Live: Science and the Near-death Experience, 1993
*The Adventures of a Parapsychologis*t, 1986
Beyond the Body: An Investigation of Out-of-the-Body Experiences, 1982
Parapsychology and Out-of-the-Body Experiences, 1978

Larry Burk, M.D., CEHP

Let Magic Happen:
From Academic Radiologist to Holistic Coach

Photo by Dagmar Ehling

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What has Dr. Burk learned from ancient indigenous belief systems? From dream journals?

What do his experiences with synchronicity teach him?

What tools does he use in his coaching work to clear out the residue of traumas?

How do acupuncture, EFT tapping, and focus on chakras work?

How does he cope with academic critics?

I'm an ENFP, which seems to fit with my academic personality as sort of an ADD in that I get bored pretty quickly and move on to the next thing. I think it fits with my Enneagram which is a 7, the Epicure. In terms of the Chinese Five Elements, I am somewhere between wood and fire and I do have some water component as well.

I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1955, a Sagittarius, and the first of three children. I went to Duke University in North Carolina for four years, then back to Pittsburgh for medical school and radiology residency. After a fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania and my first job in academics at Thomas Jefferson in Philadelphia, I made my way back down to Durham, via Virginia Beach, completing a big circle. I hated the snow in Pittsburgh and love being back down South. As a fire person, I tend not to like cold weather.

What about your family's religious beliefs? We were Presbyterians—The Frozen Chosen. They follow all the rules; it's a very capitalistic model of Protestantism. It was totally regimented and certainly wasn't evangelical. My father was a physicist and my mother was a homemaker who sang in the church choir. My dad had a naturalistic perspective, growing up as a hunter in Minnesota, so his church was taking us on hikes in the woods.

I was "born again" in high school through the Young Life Program and I was born again in college through the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, but it didn't stick either time. Now I follow a Native American eco-spirituality path. One of my guides for spirituality is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the mystic Jesuit priest and paleontologist. My brother Peter was always obsessed with Native American traditions growing up. When we played cowboys and Indians, I'd always be the cowboy, he would be the Indian.

He had an influence on me over the years and has a relationship with a number of people in the Lakota tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He's taken me to the rez multiple times and I have developed my own connection with Lakota teachers there. I've also got a local Cherokee teacher here in North Carolina, J.T. Garrett. Actually, my first shamanic teacher was another holistic radiologist, Al Marsh, who introduced me to drumming journeys in 1991.

When I came to Duke in 1973 as a freshman I attempted to sign up for a course on parapsychology. My sister Christine takes credit for having given me my first ESP book and I read more about it in *Psychology Today*. I spent the summer looking for a parapsychology course in the Duke course catalogue but there wasn't one. I realized later that Dr. J.B. Rhine had moved the parapsychology lab off campus 10 years before and severed all his connections to Duke.

When I came back to the medical center in 1993, I had a lot of metaphysical experiences in Philadelphia and Virginia Beach so the Rhine Research Center was the first place I went. I've been connected to the Rhine ever since, with its ongoing research laboratory and a lot of community activities. We have a monthly psychic experience group that I always go to and I help lead a dream group. We have lectures on Friday night once a month with either a famous psychic or scientist.

My metaphysical awakening happened in Philadelphia when I moved there in 1986. This coincided with the Harmonic Convergence that summer, watching Shirley MacLaine's *Out on a Limb* TV mini-series, discovering my first metaphysical bookstore, and my dad getting cancer. All those things happened the same year.

I joined the Magnetic Resonance Imaging Safety Committee because I was concerned about the health effects of electromagnetic fields and about patients who are claustrophobic in MRI devices. I learned hypnosis for the claustrophobia issues and then I learned acupuncture a decade later due to the electromagnetic field interests that I developed. Also, that's when I started keeping a dream diary, with over 30 years of paying attention to my dreams. Synchronicities started happening that year to guide me. When I got to Philadelphia, everything seemed to open up for me.

How does acupuncture work? We have been getting a lot of evidence-based studies on acupuncture in the last 20, 30 years, and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) is just starting to catch up and have its own evidence

base. The ironic thing about all that is that acupuncturists—my wife included—will tell you that all the studies are great but they have no impact whatsoever on how they practice acupuncture. They really just entertain the Western left brain with information about how acupuncture impacts the endorphin system. *What's the science of meridians*? I think it's a flow of energy through the connective tissue system having to do with electrical conductivity, maybe superconductivity in the semiconducting system through myelin sheaths that orthopedic pioneer Robert Becker described years ago. I think there's a real physical component to it along with a metaphysical energetic component as well.

How does that relate to the placebo effect? A better term for a placebo might be whatever it takes to activate your inner healer. It can be the power of suggestion that you are taking this pill that really has no effect, but it has a potent suggestion associated with it, so your body's innate ability to heal gets activated. The placebo effect is what we are always attempting to activate and some ways of doing it are better than others.

What about your experiences with synchronicity? In my first book, *Let Magic Happen,* when I say "magic" I am referring to synchronicities—my book is full of them. The first time I became aware that something magical was happening, I was going to interview for a job in Virginia Beach from Philadelphia, wondering if I was making the right choice. I had just finished a long day of interviews and returned to a hotel near the Edgar Cayce Center, the A.R.E that I had been reading about for several years. As I went on the elevator to go to my room, two people got on the elevator with me with A.R.E. name tags as they were attending a conference there. I asked them, "What's the conference on?" "It's on NDEs and UFO encounters." I told them, "I just sponsored a lecture on NDEs at Thomas Jefferson University for the medical students as their faculty advisor. I had to babysit my young daughter that night and couldn't go to the lecture by Ken Ring, the famous NDE researcher."

On the elevator, Ken reached out and said, "I'm sorry you missed my lecture. Why don't you come to the rest of the workshop tomorrow?" Then the woman said, "That's really strange. I just moved here from Philadelphia last summer, where I went to a lecture at your university by a radiologist who talked about electromagnetic fields in healing." I said, "Yes, that was me." I called that a double synchronicity which boosts the odds of it happening by chance to an exponential level. When one of those happens to

me, I know I am in the right place at the right time, doing what I am supposed to be doing.

How did you get interested in spirituality? I went to my first metaphysical workshop in Philadelphia. The leader had a float tank filled with salty water. It's like being in the dead sea; you float right on top of the water. They give you earplugs and close you in this cocoon. It's all dark, so you're in a sensory deprivation state that puts you into a deep relaxation. It's somewhat disorienting and I can't say that I had any real altered states of consciousness or fantastic experiences there, but it was an interesting way to get out of my head a little bit. I had just watched the movie *Altered States* (1980) with William Hurt, based on John Lilly's research on float tanks doing psychedelic drugs while floating.

I also did Holotropic Breathwork based on the work of Stanislav Grof, led by one of my best friends who was certified by him. Grof was one of the first LSD researchers and when they banned LSD, he discovered he could recreate some of the same effects by having people hyperventilate for an extended period of time. In a typical Holotropic Breathwork session done for three hours, you hyperventilate for an hour. You breathe deeper and faster for as long as you can, done to rhythmic driving jungle-type music stimulating your breathing. The second hour is transcendent movie music themes where you are being lifted up out of your body. The third hour is more mellow and integrates music. It's also been packaged as rebirthing. The experience was transformative and a useful way of getting out of my head. I also had the experience of my body shaking, so it was like a kundalini-type experience for me as well.

I was in Virginia Beach for two years and had a couple of past-life regression experiences. You have to do that if you are immersed in the Cayce material. I still find that work to be very valuable, which stimulated my interest in the crypto-archaeology and the hidden history of the civilizations of Atlantis and Egypt. When I was in Virginia Beach, I called my good friend Bob Nash's house. His wife, who was very psychic, answered the phone and said, "It's that garden guy again." I had never met her. Bob tried to figure out who she was talking about, and he suggested I might have some sort of past-life connection to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin which sounded like "garden" to him. I explored that through past-life regression that was interesting, but inconclusive.

When I rediscovered Teilhard later at Duke, I went through all his books, picked out important quotes and used them for the beginning for each of the chapters of my first book. I felt like I found my voice. I used to write a newspaper column for the Duke campus newspaper that I called the *Noosphere* which was Teilhard's concept of the consciousness of the earth. I have no idea what my actual connection to him might be, but it was rather compelling at that time in Virginia Beach.

I've done a lot of dreamwork, especially in a crisis or transition, and find it very valuable. I find that the most entertaining part of keeping a dream diary is following my precognitive dreams because I have a lot of dreams about what's going to happen in the future. There was a period, around 20 years ago, where I was dreaming about tornadoes all the time. In North Carolina, we don't have many tornadoes, but every time I would dream about tornadoes, we would have one the next day. One time when I was in Florida on a trip, I dreamed that a tornado was going to hit the terminal at the Raleigh-Durham airport. The next day, flying home, my plane was delayed because a tornado had torn the top off the terminal. I like precognitive dreams because they cause anyone to question whether they really understand how the universe works.

I've spent a lot of time hanging out with NDEers ever since that Ken Ring cosmic elevator meeting; a lot of them come back and say, "There is no linear time, it's all an illusion. Everything is happening at once." I've read Dean Radin's research about presentiment experiments which scientifically reports that people can sense the future, at least a few seconds in advance. Yet, nobody can explain how you can sense it weeks in advance or months in advance, so obviously time is not what we think it is.

What were the most difficult times in your life? When I co-founded the Duke Integrative Medicine Center, I was always pushing the envelope, like my Myers-Briggs, my Enneagram, and my Sagittarius sun sign suggest. Eventually, the envelope started to push back at Duke and they attempted to fire me. I went through real turmoil and wound up coming out on the other side, managing not to burn my bridges. When I finally wrote my book about it, everybody liked the book. I had to edit the book rather carefully because when I sent the first draft to our mindfulness meditation director asking, "What do you think of this chapter on the founding of Duke Integrative Medicine?" he said, "You have a great memory, I hope you have a good lawyer." I had to go back and edit out the anger out of the chapter about

how the powers that be pushed back at me for pushing the envelope, not doing it the Duke way.

Usually, whenever I present any of the woo-woo stuff in an academic environment, I present information with a sense of humor so they will walk away going, "Is he serious or was he joking?" That defense mechanism does help me cope. It's really about creating relationships with people and particularly relationships with important benefactors who supported me when I was stretching the envelope.

What about having acne as a teen? That was a major trauma for me all through junior high and high school. I was also deathly afraid of public speaking. I was on track to be valedictorian at my high school and realized in my junior year that I had to find some way to sabotage my grade point average in my senior year, so I signed up for public speaking and acting classes. They were the most valuable classes I took in high school and I got B's in them instead of A's to drop my grade point average just enough so I didn't have to give any talks. But now, I thrive on public speaking so that was a sort of roundabout way of creating a breakthrough for myself.

Since I was always labeled the straight-A student, the brainy kid in high school, I made a big push to become a good athlete. When I came to Duke as a pole vaulter, I realized that most other people were just as smart as I was. However, I was the best vaulter on campus, so I became "the jock" when I got to college, which was a fun twist of fate.

Does quantum physics help explain the paranormal? I hate it when metaphysical people invoke the term "quantum" to explain what they are doing when they are not physicists, and they don't really know what it means. "Quantum healing" is an imprecise use of the term. I want to be judicious about how we use the word because otherwise people who are real scientists can get turned off. I prefer to think more about non-local consciousness, everything is connected, as the indigenous traditions have been teaching for millennia. Science is just catching up now. The Lakota words *Mitakuye Oyasin* mean "We are all related." Everything is connected: The best popular illustration is the popular theme song for the Disney movie *Pocahontas*. It describes painting with all the colors of the wind, doing a marvelous job of illustrating a shamanic journey.

The metaphysical is the Great Mystery, the Great Spirit, however you want to refer to the uniting consciousness of the planet. Everyone has their own spin on it and all the different religions have their own take on it. It's

kind of like the blind people feeling an elephant and describing all the various parts of it differently. No one has the whole picture.

Do you use your spiritual insights in your work as a radiologist? As a radiologist, my skill is pattern recognition, and I've been doing this for 35 years, so I can recognize any pattern in the body almost automatically. There are occasionally times when I'll pull a whole story together as my intuition guides me to look for other things that might not be related. For example, sometimes I'll be reading an x-ray of the spine for someone with back pain. Usually, it will be a disc problem, but occasionally I'll find an unexpected metastatic bone cancer, so I'll look elsewhere on the image and find the kidney cancer where the tumor came from to put the whole story together.

How did you get interested in diagnostic dreams? I had a couple of friends who had had that experience with breast-cancer-warning-dreams which intrigued me because I'd never heard anything about it before. Then I had a third friend who had a similar dream but unfortunately, her doctor just dismissed the dream and she wound up dying of metastatic breast cancer. That inspired me to start to study it so that that didn't happen to other women who would have their dreams dismissed by their doctors. I tell people at least you can take them a copy of my paper which is published in a scientific journal and doctors should at least think twice about it before they dismiss it.

I gave a TEDx talk—which got censored by the way—it's on my website with a disclaimer by TED that this does not meet their scientific criteria.[28] I knew in the TED talk about precognitive dreams I would have to answer the question about how the mechanism works in the dreams. There are three different possibilities: one was that the women in the study had some symptoms that the subconscious translated into a dream that penetrated through their denial and confirmed that they had a problem. That's the simplest explanation from a Western medicine point of view. The second is they really didn't have any symptoms and there's some subtle signaling system that allows the subconscious to pick up on it and turn it into a dream.

The third explanation is the most woo-woo from the conventional point of view; there's an intuitive process going on that would explain how some of the women in the study had a white-coated doctor as a dream guide who they would meet in real life later and recognize from the dream. That

bends all the laws of physics and everything that we understand. On some level we are all connected, so prophetic dreams are possible. There are many different ways of being clairaudient or clairvoyant; some people do it in a more waking and intuitive state through hearing voices or seeing images. I've been interested in studying medical intuition for years but it turns out to be very difficult to prove scientifically. I've only had very limited success and other people haven't had much success either, but it is a real phenomenon and could be very valuable if it was incorporated into our medical system.

My first book *Let Magic Happen* was self-published. I got inspired to do that because I was telling all these synchronistic stories I've accumulated over the years and realized I should start writing them down before I lost any of the details. That book documents my journey from allopathic to holistic medicine. I devote many chapters to the wide variety of the techniques that I learned including hypnosis, acupuncture, EFT, and dreams. I attempted to weave in some of the science that goes along with that and included an appendix with 10 self-healing mind, body, spirit techniques. If someone subscribes to my newsletter, I send them a top-10 list of those techniques with videos so they can teach themselves how to do it.

The second book came about through a collaboration with Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos who was one of the women in my breast cancer study. She feels like she was on a mission to get the word out about how to use your dreams for health and so she and I partnered up. We included half the women from the breast cancer project with their stories in great detail and then we asked for stories about other types of illness. Most of the types of other stories we got were about cancer. There were also some interesting stories about using dreams for healing. We plan to do another dream book since we are getting more stories from people so it'll probably be similar to the last one but with different types of cancer and different stories.

I am interested in the intersection between my dream research and EFT. I give lectures on healing yourself with dreaming and tapping. I had a client this morning who is tapping with me. We were working through different issues that she had and the different chakras. The lower four chakras are particularly important because they are often out of balance from trauma experienced while growing up. She had dreams that spoke specifically to the different chakras that were out of balance, so we

designed the tapping based on what the dream was telling us to do. That's the most exciting thing I am doing at the moment.

I was introduced to EFT by Cheryl Richardson in 2002 when she said it was a perfect combination of acupuncture and hypnosis (in which I was already trained). I learned it from Gary Craig's emofree.com website and then my first EFT teacher was Carol Look, one of the EFT masters. I led tapping groups for many years and in 2009, I started a small practice to do coaching. I became a Certified Energy Health Practitioner through the ACEP organization.[29] I started doing online coaching in the last year where I work with people all around the world, which has been a lot of fun.

How does EFT work? My simple explanation is that every trauma we have is experienced as a malware program getting downloaded into our acupuncture meridian system. Then it's stored in a file in the limbic system in the brain with a picture, a story, and the program. Much like the military veterans who have flashbacks, the program will run whenever it's triggered and then your body will go back to the original scene of the trauma as an energetic flashback. With EFT, we are intentionally running the program. Then you hit the "delete" key over and over again and uninstall the program. That metaphor works quite well, according to the latest research in neurophysiology called "memory reconsolidation" because when you open a memory and then you do something to it, it's not the same memory as it was before.

How do you work with the chakras? Looking back at the ancient Hindu traditions of the wheels of energy, they are located in different parts of the body that appear to correlate with the location of endocrine glands. Those energy centers are the way that the energy field translates into the physical level. They are like valves or energy channels that transduce metaphysical energy into the body and keep it in balance. They correlate with the developmental stages of life. The first chakra reflects what happened to you when you were one year old, the second chakra is when you were two years old, the third chakra when you were three and four years old, and then on up into the higher chakras.

Most of the action for healing in the chakras is in the lower chakras because everyone wants to be in the upper chakras with intuition and speaking the truth and connected to the divine, but until you clean up the lower three chakras, the energy doesn't flow up in your higher chakras very effectively. *I work with the chakras as the unconscious mind. Do you*? I

think of the body itself as the unconscious mind. So much of what psychology refers to as the subconscious I think of as being stored in the body and in the energy field.

I think of illness as a metaphor for issues—such as breast cancer is lack of self-nurturance. Does that show up in your research? [*See Barbara Stone.**] That's a pretty typical story from breast cancer dreamers. I do believe that many diseases have a somatic metaphor associated with them. If some message from your subconscious is getting translated into your body, your life story comes out in your body in some meaningful way. In order to heal, you need to tap into that message, figure out what the body wants, and give it what it wants. The best way to deal with somatic metaphors is to treat them as if we are actually in a waking dream while we are conscious. Just like we do dream interpretation about the symbols that we get from our dream life, you can treat the waking life the same way.

I would interpret physical symptoms the same way I interpret dream symbols: as if this is a waking dream and you are having this experience. Just like one of the goals in lucid dreaming is that you'd like to wake up in the dream and realize this is just a dream, these are similar waking symbols I can work with. It's a lot healthier way to deal with your body, rather than just shooting the messenger when the messages come through.

What organizations do you refer to stay current? The Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (energypsych.org), The Rhine Research Center (rhine.org), the International Association for Near-Death Studies (iands.org), and The International Association for the Study of Dreams (asdreams.org).

What do you do for fun? My wife and I do kayaking and biking as well as ballroom dancing, which is a lot of fun and good mind-body exercise.

Do you have hope in the face of current global problems? Two things that give me hope, speaking specifically about Donald Trump, I look at him as the manifestation of the Jungian shadow president. He is also the trickster president since you never know what he's going to tweet next, and in Native American traditions, the trickster is always an important healing character. He is the apocalyptic president; people need to be reminded that it does not mean Armageddon or the end of the world, as apocalypse means the veil will be lifted and everything will be revealed. Trump is known for

saying things that half the population is thinking but no one else would dare to say so he blurts out the shadow elements.

When you look at the results, so many things have been revealed during this presidential cycle from the Democratic National Committee corruptions through WikiLeaks to all the other scandals that have been revealed. And then if you look at what's happened since he's been president, the first thing that occurred was they pulled down all the Confederate monuments in the Southern states. That would have not have happened if Hillary Clinton had been President. The #MeToo movement probably wouldn't have happened if Clinton had been the President either. Trump catalyzed a lot of people into finally taking action, including about the environment.

I get up every day curious to see what's going to be revealed next. I think Trump is playing his role as the trickster to the hilt. You couldn't have picked a more paradoxical man for the job and if Hillary had been elected, nothing would have changed for women, like nothing changed for the blacks during Obama's presidency.

I am encouraged by a line from the *Desiderata:* "Regardless of whether it's clear to you or not, it's still likely that the universe is unfolding as it should be," so I am trusting the process. The other reason I do is that I spend a lot of time reading books and talking to people with NDEs who bring back the big message that we're all connected to unconditional love. According to statistics, about 4% of people have had NDEs and come back with this message of no fear of death, an altruistic sense of purpose, psychic abilities, and healing abilities. I see this as embodying Christ Consciousness. These people who have been resurrected are the living embodiment of Christ, so they are the physical manifestation of the Second Coming. Since there are seven billion people, that's almost 300 million people. It's a critical mass that's shifting into planetary consciousness.

Teilhard De Chardin said that we are moving towards the convergence point, which is the goal of evolution, and the further development of consciousness. I think the real big irony is that we started resuscitating people back in the 1950s with the invention of the ventricular defibrillator, so this mass awakening is a by-product of our technology. I kind of like that. My two take-home points are to tap and keep a dream journal.

Books

Let Magic Happen: Adventures in Healing with a Holistic Radiologist, 2012

Dreams That Can Save Your Life: Early Warning Signs of Cancer and Other Diseases, 2018

Web Site

http://www.larryburk.com

J.J. Hurtak, Ph.D. and Desiree Hurtak, Ph.D.

Future Science

Photo by AFFS

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What are the Drs. Hurtak's views on consciousness and Future Science? How do they unify spirituality and science?

What is the importance of the Divine Feminine?

What theories do they suggest to explain psi phenomena like remote viewing and the existence of extraterrestrials?

JJ Hurtak is a Leo and Desiree Hurtak is a Sagittarius, both ENFP temperament types. **JJ:** We'd like to be defined by our intellectual and cultural accomplishments rather than simply by labels, which I think were a throwback to the '60s and '70s to the MMPI, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory studies. I think this tends to diminish people coming from multicultural backgrounds and those who have different takes on spiritual and consciousness reality. As we expand our views into the 21st century, let's just call us futurists because we are forward-looking multi-disciplinarians.

Desiree: We also call ourselves cosmic citizens and we celebrate our birthday as January 2nd and 3rd, 1973, when Dr. Hurtak had a unique experience while he was in Northern California. He was shown "future scientific information," but knew that eventually the same wisdom and knowledge would progress in its own way to all of humanity. That is why his information was to be shared with humanity on fuller, more collective levels of genetics, astrophysics, and archaeology so that humanity is prepared to take a quantum leap forward. Our research indicates that humanity is ready to take that leap.

JJ: We are both from the Midwest. I am from the Minneapolis, Saint Paul area, my wife is from Chicago. I grew up in the Midwest, attended the University of Minnesota, the University of Chicago, and then the University of California where I began my academic work. My wife is from Chicago as well as Florida; she spent all of her early life there before she went to college in California. Our parents were professionals of European background who had more of a humanistic approach to life and I, as a young student, was allowed to study a wide variety of religious and cultural philosophies.

In high school, I was in the Accelerated Learning Program and was interested in learning the ancient languages of the Classics and religious texts: Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. All of these were important languages for me because I was drawn to the substance of the spiritual, mystical traditions. I started to learn the linguistic tools and the cultural insights that would be necessary to persevere in these areas.

My parents encouraged me to study everything that pertained to the nature of life. I studied Judaic, Christian, even the Buddhist movements of thought and philosophy, learning the languages and the disciplines necessary to be a scholar. I was especially interested in the areas of comparative religion, anthropology, linguistics, and the cognitive sciences and their mystical aspects as applied to modern-day explorations of paraphysics and consciousness. At an early age, I was also invited by the famous Robert Hutchins to participate as a fellow at The Center for The Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California.

Desiree's father received his medical diploma for surgery at the University of Vienna. **DH**: Both Dr. Hurtak's parents and my parents were not very involved in religious studies so we could do what we wanted and they respected that. I was a child of the '60s, at a time when books like *Be Here Now* by Ram Dass and *An Autobiography of a Yogi* by Yogananda were read as East was meeting West. As these philosophies were coming of age, I read most of them. I thought the ideas were fantastic and enlightening. My mom was a very independent person. She started as a Catholic but realized that there were so many controls that she didn't want to place them on her kids. She told us you can get divorced if you really need to. She realized that she also had a connection to the Divine and did not have to go through a minister or priest.

JJ: My first paraphysical experience took place when I was 16 years old. I was reading one of the ancient texts, the text of *Ezekiel*, when a sphere of light appeared in my room and I thought this was a good sign. I had studied religious philosophy, including many ancient texts of the Near East and the Far East. I decided to take a trip to Egypt in the 1960s when the importance of the Nag Hammadi Coptic text was recognized by scholars as throwing light onto the missing books of the Bible and providing a greater focus on the ancient knowledge that shaped Western civilization. *What languages did you know as an adolescent besides Hebrew?* Mainly Latin and Greek, which gave me a head start in looking more systematically

at the influences of the Near Eastern cultures that turned out to be a bridge to my studies of Sanskrit and the Oriental traditions.

DH: I met my husband at the California Institute of the Arts in the Los Angeles area. **JJ**: I was hired by Walt Disney's brother Roy to teach science to young actors and filmmakers. **DH**: Dr. Hurtak was one of the founding professors at Cal Arts in 1970, including some of the great minds in music such as Ravi Shankar and Leonard Bernstein. **JJ**: I was also teaching in the School of Critical Studies with Art Critic Max Kozloff and other leading futuristic thinkers. **DH**: On the art side, there was Judy Chicago, Sheila de Bretteville, Miriam Schapiro, Arlene Raven, etc. *I interviewed some of these feminists in my book on women's culture and brought them to CSUC for a conference, which was edited in a video called* Feminist Visions of the Future, *available on my YouTube channel.*

DH: When I met him, he was taking his students to the Self-Realization Fellowship founded by Yogananda in Los Angeles in 1920. We also visited Dr. Thich Thien-An, a Vietnamese Buddhist scholar who had a school called The University of Oriental Studies, where Dr. Hurtak would occasionally teach.

How did you have time to get two Ph.D.s and a divinity degree? **JJ**: I was gifted with a deep interest in everything under the sun that dealt with ancient texts, as well as futurism, and so I decided that I would get degrees in what some thinkers call the four quadrants (social, historical, spiritual, and scientific), which took considerable time. I started my theological training in my teens, but with my multi-disciplinary work and travels that brought me around the world, it took me 25 years of studying eight major religions to come up with five advanced degrees. Part of this involved Coptic and Greek writings.

Later, Desiree and I translated the *Pistis Sophia* documents of the second and third century A.D., written in ancient Greek and Coptic languages. The five volumes run about 1000 pages, so this was a major undertaking. **DH**: *The Pistis Sophia* is a well-accepted Coptic Christian text read by the Egyptians and Christians in the first centuries of the present era, giving insight on the teachings of Christ. Of course, this text is not accepted by the Roman Catholics. It explains the story of Jesus' female disciples. Mary Magdalene and Martha talk about theology after the resurrection of Jesus when he reappeared to his disciples by temporarily returning from the higher realms to instruct both his male and female disciples.

JJ: It provides a teaching on the Divine Feminine by means of the narrative vehicle of Sophia, the symbol of Wisdom who is in search of higher truth. This allows for a dialog covering many theological questions initiated by Mary Magdalene. I think it is the most important post-New Testament document available in early Christianity, in the context of Jesus' time as a healer, a miracle worker, and representative of the messianic office. The text also explains the Judaic traditions and Oriental mystical traditions with very profound truths, encouraging everyone to search for the Divine through humility, service to humanity, and "putting on the mind of Christ" through Wisdom.

DH: In our book, the *Pistis Sophia Text and Commentary,* regarding this ancient scroll, we provide commentary to explain the meaning of the mystical text. We wrote a similar commentary for the ancient scroll called *The Gospel of Mary* thought to be written by Mary Magdalene, also found in the Coptic literature. Both show that women played a major philosophical role in early Christianity. Some of these books are available through Amazon and some through our website (keysofenoch.org).

What kind of insights came from the studies of Sophia and Mary Magdalene? **JJ**: The African and the Eastern churches never marginalized the role of the female, unlike what we historically saw in the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. The female concept of Sophia in the Greek (or the word *Chokmah* in the Hebrew) is associated with wisdom and in some instances with the work of the Holy Spirit. During the first three centuries of Christianity, before it became politicized by the Roman Empire, there was a very open and charismatic aspect to Christianity. That's why you have so many miracles taking place in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia before Christianity became dogmatized and politicized. For most in the West, the female element was lost, the divine female nature that represents our co-participation with the Divine Spirit or Holy Spirit is only recently being restored.

Our personal emphasis is to move away from the political hierarchies of power to the cosmic horizon of intelligent life in the universe, which, as part of the Godhead, represents a form of life that has no restrictions related to dimensions or stellar systems. Greater life encompasses ultra-terrestrial dimensions, but also the Divine Linkage within us, not simply thousands of light-years away. When you learn that there is no end to the myriad worlds spinning throughout nature, we move into a deeper spirituality and begin to

integrate science and spirituality back together to see that we are on a much larger journey and that the blueprint of higher evolution provides everyone with Wisdom.

Desiree, what was your Ph.D. subject area and how did you learn those ancient languages? **DH**: My Masters from Syracuse was in International Relations and my Ph.D. was from The New School for Social Research, that is, The New School University, and my topic was Environmental Public Policy, where we connected often with the United Nations. I attended Cal Arts to study environmental design and architecture and moved into seeing how countries and people can talk with each other about important issues.

What have been the most difficult challenges in your life and how have you coped? **JJ**: The challenge is to bring the spiritual and scientific together: The spiritual represents the female side of the human mind, the multidimensional and creative side; while the male represents the more logical, scientific, pragmatic side of the human creation. Our work has been to resolve the dialectic between these two different traditions. We publish widely both in scientific journals as well as in publications on "New Thought" and participate at major conferences dealing with world unity in religion and science. To this end, we were recently presenters in Toronto at the World's Parliament of Religions, which is an inspiring forum where we've presented our work five times during the recent decades.

DH: Fortunately, we really haven't had personal problems because we've had each other so we could support each other. In fact, some people say we should give courses on marriage. *What would it include?* **JJ**: To be highly empathetic, altruistic, and highly forgiving. Also, be aware of the limitations of the human psyche and seek a higher ground, a common ground for inner change between the space of creativity and the space of the heart. *From a woman's point of view, wasn't it hard to have equality when you started your relationship as professor-student?* **DH**: Yes, it took a while for me to grow into it. I only partly spoke in lectures and radio shows with him before the 1990s. Since the 1990s, we teach and talk together all the time. The most important thing I would say for a marriage is the finding of greater commonalities and greater sharing.

Some people complain that Dr. Hurtak's work tends to emphasize the masculine, which they see in both science and in Judeo-Christian philosophy, but it really does not fly when I am taking part in the sharing.

The main artist in *The Keys of Enoch*® was a woman and I also created several pictures in the book, as well as the cover [*and this book's cover image*]. So there's a lot of feminine in there as well. He's always been very open to sharing, which is what makes it work! We know from your work that you understand that the feminine aspect has the balance of masculine within it, but both are needed to find that inner balance and that greater peace.

Did you have children along the way or have you been too busy with books? **DH**: Our books and audio creations are our children! Putting out this information in the 1970s was our challenge until science later came out with what we call "scientific confirmations." For example, around 2010, Lika Guhathakurta of NASA headquarters in Washington DC said the exact same thing as Dr. Hurtak wrote in his book *The Keys of Enoch*® in the 1970s: that our "sun is a variable star." Until that time our Sun was considered pretty steady in its patterns of solar flares and other cycles. Now a new understanding shows energetic changes and variability. We are having less difficulty now getting our points across, but in the 1970s there was a lot of ignorance about these topics. When Dr. Hurtak wrote *The Keys of Enoch*® in 1973, it was a pioneering book in that it talks about pyramids when people didn't even understand what a pyramid really was, more specifically the alignment of the Great Pyramid with stars in the belt of Orion.

DH: Where we were really challenged was in getting the information out to people across the world and getting them to understand the non-local, multi-level, multi-dimensional universe that we live in and, most importantly, that we are all interconnected! This means we can all make a difference in what we do. **JJ**: What also disturbs us is the overemphasis on a culture of violence that poses a great challenge. It's critical for humanity to participate in a raising of consciousness to create a "culture of peace," to bring all traditions together on a higher level, with a meta-language to provide inner experiences and greater resources that go beyond the paradigms of traditional science, politics, and religion. They tend to be singular and self-serving in trying to hold on to power in a more parochial way rather than being pluralistic.

JJ: A good example of positive work came from Dr. Masaru Emoto from Japan, whom we sponsored in New York and also at the United Nations.[30] **DH**: Emoto taught us you need to be careful of what you say to

your children because if you hit them or become negative towards them, you are affecting the whole consciousness around them and you. He showed how your physical body, through the power of water, literally changes with positive and negative thoughts. He tried to awaken people to this, which has also been our struggle.

DH: We are optimistic that this unity can arise, but for now we feel we are pulling the mental dinosaurs along with us. We have lectured with Dr. Eben Alexander* who also has experienced this difficulty, and Dr. Hurtak wrote a book with Russell Targ* who also was challenged for his work in paraphysics. We worked extensively with Dr. Elizabeth Rauscher, a nuclear physicist from UC Berkeley, who worked with Targ in the '70s to research RV. We authored a recent book with her entitled *Mind Dynamics*.

When you study RV around the world, you realize this is a scientific breakthrough connected with quantum physics, because it shows a non-local reality where there is no separation of any kind. Dr. Rauscher's theory on quantum physics, due to her knowledge of RV, literally takes on another dimension that she calls "eight space" or eighth-dimensional space. What we call "complex eight space" is where time and space come together allowing for certain types of mind-over-matter activities to occur, e.g., RV, allowing for concurrent and consistent information to filter into our spacetime.

JJ: We are happy to say that things have moved very quickly in the last 45 years as we see a plethora of friends and colleagues in many disciplines who see the pluralistic model as opposed to the parochial model of self-individualism. Again, we see our biggest challenge is to bring together the spiritual and scientific in a complementary way. Here, it can be defined as the ancient religious/spiritual philosophy that needs to work with scientific futurism, which is why we formed The Academy For Future Science. In essence, we feel there is always a higher road which includes science guided by Consciousness.

JJ: There was a separation for 400 years in the West between scientific philosophy and religious philosophy, which created a mental vacuum as to how the mind works or creates on multi-levels. Now a considerable co-creativity is arising. However, in the Eastern traditions, it was better understood and is akin to our studies in RV and remote sensing which demonstrate the possibility that we are but one evolutionary

experience in the midst of myriad evolutionary experiences in an open-ended cosmology.

DH: New findings in science are bringing us closer to religion, whether it be of the Eastern or Western traditions. The premise behind the book Dr. Hurtak wrote with Russell Targ* called *The End of Suffering* unites both quantum physics and the philosophy of the Eastern sage, Nagarjuna, who provided profound insights into mental liberation. Nagarjuna is the sage who says that life is not black or white, it's actually both and neither, going into all possible alternatives and even those that are not real alternatives. That's really what we are seeing with quantum physics: light is both a particle and a wave, but we can affect it as the Observer.

JJ: Our religious and philosophical thrust acknowledges the contribution of great minds, like Nagarjuna who is considered the second Buddha by the Dalai Lama. We are interested in the writers of the Sutras, the *Heart Sutra,* for example, the *Lotus Sutra* in the Eastern tradition. We're also interested in the prophets and mystics of the Western tradition, including Martin Buber who was a great Judaic thinker in the 1930s and '40s, a period demonstrating "the dark side of the human psyche."

Let's go into more depth about your mystical experience in 1973. **JJ**: I was meditating, because as a young scholar I believed I could not teach my students the concepts of the transcendental without understanding what some would call higher states of consciousness. I began to use a combination of seed syllables from various sacred pathways, combining the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Coptic, and Sanskrit languages. From what I read, I felt that certain states of consciousness could be accelerated, without drugs, through these vibrations, much like saying mantras in the East.

At one point, a morphogenetic door opened before me. A paraphysical reality came forth, where I was able to see a Whole Light Being, like an angelic form, but it was a higher Teacher or spiritual guide. I was literally bilocated into a greater realm of Light and from then on my whole reality changed. I saw how to use the sparks of wisdom that could help draw together threads of commonality in the different religious traditions through a higher path of peace, nonviolence, and wisdom.

I also saw how there is a higher unity in terms of science and spiritual dynamics, through a universal Consciousness that can be used both in locality and non-locality in the sense of quantum physics. It enables us to

acquire information and gain the ability to use the gifts of the paraphysical, the paranormal. This led me to begin to reach out with a positive psychology and sociology for the advancement of the human race.

Did this angelic-like being provide you with the seed sounds or is that something you used to get into the experience? **JJ**: I had been studying the importance of musical linguistics and sound resonance, along with right consciousness thinking. I was given a gift from the higher realms of Intelligence to have a face-to-face dialog with a Being of Light. **DH**: We encourage people to have their own spiritual practices, including that of the mystics, but Dr. Hurtak's experience was quite unique as he was taken beyond our space and time. This could be called a *Merkabah* experience. **JJ**: The term *Merkabah* is used in my book because it is really a vehicle that can take you beyond the limitations of any extraterrestrial spaceship; it is a multidimensional vehicle that can take you into the higher dimensions.

When I think of Merkabah, I think of sacred geometry. **JJ**: Yes, it is sacred geometry, not to be confused with a metal UFO extraterrestrial spaceship. We have illustrated some aspects of this in our animated, award-winning video entitled *Merkabah, Voyage of A Starseed.* **DH**: The Hebrew definition of the word Merkabah in English is "vehicle" so it can be any vehicle in the real sense. In ancient tradition, the Merkabah is generally considered to be a higher vehicle that took the prophets into other realms. Paul, in the New Testament, was taken to the third heaven—much like Ezekiel in the Old Testament, through what would be classified as Merkabah experiences.[31] Kabbalists and ancient Biblical sages divided the heavens in this way.

What kind of download of information did you get? **JJ**: I gained information covering a wide variety of subjects, 64 areas of science and consciousness and information about the past, present, and future, and insights like how the genetic matrix of our DNA is connected with a multi-level God Code. The God-Code is a code of knowledge through which one sees the mathematics of the universe unfolding down to atoms and the genetic code of our bodies, which we claim confirms the existence of a Universal Mind. For the most part, these areas were futuristic, but also included deeper insights regarding historic places and areas of contact around the world where certain artifacts of knowledge would be found. So in short, it was a series of mental images including archival information that

I would be personally involved with during the rest of my life—and that has come to pass.

How have you continued to pursue this download? **JJ:** In the last 45 years, we've worked in Egypt, Japan, Mexico, and other countries where we uncovered archaeological information suggesting an earlier stratum of civilized life on Mother Earth that was behind the great myths and legends. We were part of the team, for example, that uncovered the Tomb of Osiris in Giza, Egypt. Humanity understands these legends on one level but dismisses their reality on another. I believe most legends have relevance to the human psyche in some manner. *Do you think evolved beings seeded earth and taught early humans?* Yes, I feel that the ancient Greek and Hebrew concepts of Creation allude to the fact that life comes from a higher level or dimension, which took place during a "golden age." This is one possible explanation which is also alluded to in our recent book called *Giza's Industrial Complex* (by Drs. Hurtak and James Brown) which shows that the Egyptians made use of advanced science.

DH: This book shows how the ancient area of Egypt where the Great Pyramid is found could reveal a technology that is similar to what we are developing today in terms of hydrogen fuel cells and similar technologies using hydrogen gas derived from water. **JJ**: This is quite an explosive book, based on possible ancient technology. Many cultural historians and anthropologists acknowledge the fact that the Egyptians had a "Golden Age of the Gods" with possible visitations from levels of cosmic intelligence, as recorded by early Egyptian writers. These legends talk about a higher level of intelligent life that was momentarily in the Middle East in early times, bringing forth scientific trade-offs in the building of massive monuments that had stellar accuracy.

This sounds like a huge download of information to unpack for the rest of your life. How did you remember it or record it? **DH**: This relates back to quantum physics and consciousness. When Dr. Hurtak experienced this information, he saw it as visual scenarios coded within his mind, which he detailed as 64 main Keys shown in calligraphy script in *The Keys of Enoch*® over 600 pages.

What's an example of one of the Keys? **JJ**: The book details many ancient sacred areas of the Earth. One is the alignment of the Great Pyramid is with the Belt of Orion, which was not known in 1973. Specifically, I describe how the south shaft from the Kings Chamber points to the three

major stars in the Belt of Orion: Mintaka, Alnitak, and Alnilam, while the north shaft points to the circumpolar stars. This was later confirmed by astronomical maps made by computers that could go back in astrophysical time to analyze the past. They were able to show how the star shafts were indeed aligned with the stars in the Belt of Orion, some 800 to 1300 light-years away from Mother Earth. These star shafts are very small, precise, and orientated through hundreds of meters of stone, suggesting that the Great Pyramid was an astrophysical gauge or computer within a massive monumental construction using precise calculations. A similar alignment of the Giza Plateau to Orion was popularized by Robert Bauval, Adrian Gilbert, and others working with him in 1993, 20 years later.

So information came from those stars in Orion's Belt that people could access through the pyramid? **JJ**: The alignment of pyramids all over the world with the three stars in the Belt of Orion is an important gauge of an astrophysical connection with ancient cultures showing a common grid of measurement, including a mathematical and astronomical understanding of our universe at a much earlier period than described by the Europeans. The Giza Pyramids are like an astrophysical computer showing the procession of the equinoxes, revealing that the ancient Egyptians and their predecessors were able to use a sophisticated calendar cycle, not just showing solar and lunar cycles, but also astronomical cycles built specifically into their massive structures.

DH: Moreover, we did not know in the '70s that we exist in the so-called Orion arm of our Milky Way. Another recent discovery was that not only did the Egyptians connect with Orion, but so did the Mayan culture. This information came from an astro-archaeologist named Linda Schele, which is one of the key points that Dr. Hurtak understood from his experience. Many cultures mention Orion and many places all around the world actually have monuments with alignments to Orion, indicating a mythology that most people haven't recognized.

Some people talk about the Pleiadians or other ETs who've been helpful, like John Ryan's Sireans.* **DH**: The Pleiades is a significant star system in mythology and legends, but there are many other star systems. When Dr. Hurtak was bilocated beyond this planet, he went through certain superluminal dimensions of reality where his body was actually gone for a couple of days. He explained a multidimensional reality, but this is not channeling. He had students who actually did lose him for a period of

between 36 to 48 hours. **JJ**: When I came back, there was actually a bioluminescent around my body that my students could see for several weeks afterwards. **DH**: In fact, many unique experiences took place around him during the rest of the year.

JJ: *The Keys of Enoch*® looks at a variety of disciplines because it contains 64 areas of science that include complicated formulae. It further examines ideas overlooked by cultural historians and theologians, providing a vast blueprint for world thinkers to ponder. I was very mindful while bringing this information forward because I didn't want my experience to be taken out of context. At the same time, I wanted this information to be thoroughly researched. I was already trained in field research with remote sensing using ground-penetrating radar and other means of establishing what is called "ground truth" by geologists and physicists. I also was aware of RV work going on at SRI and in Russia (*see* Russell Targ*).

DH: Dr. Hurtak was told that this information is being shown to us to prepare us for a quantum leap in all areas of knowledge. I come from an environmental background and clearly, our planet isn't doing so well. We may have to advance our technology in order to survive. We have to realize that we need solar and wind energy; we need to advance ourselves consciously too, so if we do encounter other cosmic intelligences, we are prepared with better knowledge and we need to understand our own genetic makeup. We need to grow into a new cosmology of consciousness to help all life forms on this planet.

JJ: We also had the opportunity to dialogue over many years with people around the world: from the Americas' indigenous people to the native peoples of southern Africa. We found that many of these indigenous people refer to Orion as some sort of spiritual gateway or astrophysical threshold behind civilization. We have also had the honor to be asked to speak on behalf of certain Brazilian tribes at environmental conferences, including some sponsored by the United Nations such as The Rio+20 in Brazil, 2012.

What's the importance of this connection to Orion? **JJ:** In the *Book of Job*, Chapter 38, we find a reference to "sons of God" and Orion as an area in the heavens that is part of the blueprint of astrophysics. **DH**: Orion may be a portal to other realms, but we don't believe you will find little green men or strange-looking extraterrestrials. We are an Adamic species that may have its origins in the heavens so "we" will find "us" in the stars as

well. You may find us in Alpha Centauri, one of the nearest other solar systems, you may find us in the Pleiades and you may find we have an Orion connection. If you don't find us, you may find some of our cosmic cousins. Some will look like us and have similar types of intelligence and many are not like us.

We are looking at cosmic life like a biological textbook with different categories of which there may be as many as 70+ different species that we've identified through our research with anthropologists, social scientists, shamans. and indigenous leaders who we've spoken with in more than 130 countries. *So there are 70 types of ETs?* Yes, we are dealing with a much larger cosmo-biological textbook composed of physical, as well as non-physical life forms.

DH: They're beyond the third and fourth dimensions, as we mentioned regarding the research of Dr. Elizabeth Rauscher about fifth- to eighth-dimensional realities. Dr. Rauscher feels that RV is seeing beyond the third and fourth dimensions, which make up our local spacetime. RV is the science of seeing events at a distance beyond what the physical eyes can see, where you can "observe" what is taking place on the other side of the planet. Although non-locality is also a clue, what is taking place, as we have argued in scientific papers, is the observer influencing reality from the eighth dimension. It's the area of complex reality where space and time link together past, present, and future.

Is it just our consciousness that exists in the eighth dimension, or are there other beings that function in those dimensions as well? Who are the angels that exist in our cosmology? Are they in other dimensions, maybe even in the 8^{th} or 24^{th} dimension? More importantly, if quantum physics and non-locality work everywhere, the angels or light beings don't have to leave the 24^{th} dimension, they only need to place (i.e., superposition) their consciousness linkage where we are now, to be here too.

JJ: We have a plethora of categories of beings. We have the ETs and we also have the "ultraterrestrials" who are different from physical extraterrestrials. We use the expression "the cosmic others" to include representations from more than 70+ different cultures—some are physical, while others are in an energy form. *You know about these because of your own mystical communication and talking with shamans or how?* **JJ**: I have also consulted with some of the former astronauts once they retired and were more open to talking about what they experienced when they were in

outer space. I have put some of this information in a video entitled *Extraterrestrial Realities*. I worked with astronaut Gordon Cooper who was a pioneer in space. Desiree and I worked with the famous American novelist, Sydney Sheldon, on a book published in the early 1990s called *The Doomsday Conspiracy*. It deals with actual contact that American government officials had with ETs. Although it is written as science fiction, it was based on fact.

Gordon Cooper and I both spoke to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, as well as the late Kofi Annan, about the need to have a space policy to accept the ET hypothesis and to go beyond the secrecy bubble which tends to put out disinformation. We believe we are in the midst of a process of orientation so that all of humanity will be prepared for contact with the other worlds of intelligence. The understanding has to come through advanced science or future science.

DH: A lot of the cosmology we understand today as the norm, Dr. Hurtak saw in his experience when it was still unknown in the 1970s. For example, we now know there are trillions and trillions of stars, there are hundreds of billions of galaxies, etc. For every star we see now (I learned this from an astrophysicist connected with the University of Massachusetts), there are at least five to seven planets around most stars. There are also rogue planets, called wandering planets, that don't orbit stars. There may be more wandering planets than there are orbiting planets. There may even be some extremophiles living on Earth that could also live on Mars or Venus. Of course, most scientists do not feel that advanced life could reach us at this time.

JJ: They did find some unique structural, fossilized-looking forms that may have existed in the past on Mars when they cut open the Allan Hills Meteorite 84001 that was catapulted from Mars to the Antarctic. **DH**: A meteorite was found there in 1984 probably came from Mars. Inside there was some sort of structure that looked like an organic fossil. Many scientists do feel that this was confirmation that there is or was some primitive life form, probably not on the surface of Mars any longer, but possibly existing underneath the surface.

Do ETs have physical bodies? **DH**: We believe there are myriads of life forms in space, some primitive, some looking like us, and some more advanced life forms perhaps operating in multidimensions. Certainly, we have all heard of legends and many are starting to have experiences in their

lives where they sense other levels of intelligence in their midst. We further believe there is a cosmic consciousness force that is behind all life, which can be seen in some of life's synchronicities. I think synchronicity is so important to be aware of and can be very profound like when you run into an old friend in a coffee shop and it changes your whole life. We actually recognize a higher divinity behind everything.

Do you agree that our most pressing problem is the environment and that we don't have much time to prevent global warming that will fry us? Do you think that zero-point energy can replace fossil fuels and help save us? **DH**: We've worked in the alternative energy field for the last 40 years. Look at California for example, having major fires! So when you say fry us, you are literally talking about what is happening right now to many people just down the street from you. We are not doomsayers, but we've worked a lot with technology and spin-offs from hydrogen energy technology—the ancient Egyptians probably used some form of hydrogen energy. We are always excited to hear about zero-point energy devices that use vacuum fluctuations or even electromagnetic generators and thrusters. In principle, they have been shown to work but building them for public use is only in the future.

We do need alternative energy resources because the more destructive our environment becomes the more violence and stress are placed on our society. At one point I was an adjunct professor at the State University of New York and I showed my students that when you have environmental crises, you end up having political and economic crises as well. Why do we have all the immigration from Africa and Central America? Many are literally starving because of lack of rain or changes to their environment. **JJ**: In North and in Central Africa especially, so we are looking at a much larger picture.

When I was a Director of TMAC (Technology and Marketing Analysis Corporation) in San Francisco, we brought literally thousands of engineers, scientists, and businessmen together in the 1980s to look at the possibility of a new approach through renewable and alternative energies, but the paradigms were not opened enough to allow this great leap forward in science.

DH: *The Keys of Enoch*® actually uses the term "zero-point energy" back in the early 1970s. This is the concept of using energy from beyond our local structure, so you don't violate the Second Law of

Thermodynamics, maybe using even a multidimensional reality of pulling in energy from other realities through either quantum or electromagnetic fields. This will be a great breakthrough and scientists all over the world are working on this. However, I think the next, most immediate step will most likely be hydrogen energy derived from water, maybe even saltwater, and we have plenty of it.

But it takes a lot of energy to create hydrogen fuel. **DH**: Yes and no. There are different ways of breaking down molecules of water and you don't have to do it completely to create an "oxyhydrogen" mix; or if you do, you can use solar energy to separate the water and that is almost free. In addition to hydrogen fuel there are those who are trying to utilize alternative energy fields, like Elon Musk who created SpaceX, Tesla Motors, and supported SolarCity and now Neuralink because he is concerned that AI intelligence may out-think us.

When we have a deeper understanding of consciousness, we realize we are all interconnected and what we think and do affects everybody around us. Then we can start graduating into a more peaceful and more loving society, in which case we can also stop being preoccupied with ourselves and find and implement new ways to help the planet. That's what quantum physics is all about—that interconnectedness that we all share and the entanglement that makes all of us part of one humanity.

JJ: We want to emphasize that greater breakthroughs will come through a consciousness shift as mentioned in our book *Mind Dynamics in Space and Time,* co-authored with Dr. Rauscher, in which we show the practical side of RV. It is the power of mental communication whereby we can travel into outer space. Astronaut Edgar Mitchell had an epiphany while he was coming back on the Apollo mission. He later communicated certain mathematical symbols, received by colleagues Ingo Swann and Harold Sherman. Through RV, we, too, were able to work over long distances to find underground artifacts in Egypt. All of this opens up a whole new door to the power of consciousness.

*W*ere *you both able to do RV as well as study it?* **DH**: Dr. Rauscher is far better than us, but we do it from time to time. **JJ**: I did RV back in the early '70s to see and publish the pyramidal formations on Mars later seen by NASA when they did the Mariner 9 studies, as described in *The Keys of Enoch*®. We were the first to break the story with actual pictures that there were pyramidal formations on Mars. NASA was intrigued but they saw

them as natural formations. However, to us, they suggest that at one time, Mars, our sister planet, possibly had a similar biosphere that could house intelligent life.

Could you comment about space law? **JJ**: Space law is the blueprint for exo-industrialization and future colonization. We have publications in several legal and aerospace journals stating that we need not only a global ethic, but we need a space ethic. With the ongoing commercialization of space and sometimes even the desire to place weapons of mass destruction in space, changes need to be made. We worked with astronaut Edgar Mitchell who, before he died, put forth a treaty on space law in collaboration with his colleague Carol Rosin to try to protect outer space from becoming weaponized. In Brazil, I also added some chapters to a book called *Space Law (Directo Especial)*. It's in Portuguese and hopefully will be translated into English. The book details the norms that we must keep in mind as we go to our sister planets, to avoid the exploitation of their planetary resources, while at the same time building our civilization in space.

What do you do to get into the receptive space so you can do RV or access higher information? **DH**: The key to RV, as Targ and Rauscher will tell you, is that everybody can do it. Targ emphasizes this because initially, he didn't think he could do it until he tried. When he had to RV a target in South America he was very successful. It's really about quieting/clearing your mind and then noting the very first thing that comes to your mind even if it doesn't make sense to you. For example, once Uri Geller only saw two circles with some lines connecting them. He did not understand the image, although his RV drawing turned out to be very accurate as the object was eyeglasses; it doesn't have to make sense; that's the key. Some people do this all the time without knowing it. **JJ**: So take a step beyond the traditional paradigm of logic and separation and you can begin to see with "all space," where the whole horizon of knowledge literally makes itself available to your mind.

DH: We were with Rupert Sheldrake in England who has shown how dogs and cats also have this ability. There is even a psychic parrot he tested in New York that is able to remote view. The tribe of people we've been working with in Brazil do it all the time. If they need rain, they work with the forces of nature to bring rain. More and more people are starting to see

the truth, especially young people. They are actually RVing and having experiences on other consciousness levels and it's natural for them.

JJ: We hope your readers will take time to look at books I have co-authored with Targ and Rauscher. In a third book, I wrote an introduction with Russian scientists called *Reflections on Life and Intelligence on Planet Earth*. These books deal with how leading investigators all over the world are looking into the paraphysical door that is now being opened through the powers of consciousness.

Are you suggesting that we can be trained to access information through RV and the paranormal to get answers to our problems? **DH**: We know scientists in Silicon Valley who have used the technique of RV and paranormal awareness successfully, although some may simply call it inspiration, but they have been very successful in defining new technology. Even Einstein meditated every morning for inspiration. We know this because he often stayed in Palm Springs in a house later purchased by a friend of ours, who found records of Einstein and pictures of him there.

Targ did a successful RV study of the silver commodities market and this was followed up by a similar study by the University of Colorado at Boulder (see Garret Moddel*).[32] We are not suggesting this type of use, but it has worked successfully when properly tested. **JJ**: So, the thrust is that consciousness is the variable for quantum transitions. The bottom-line for the future should be future science, which is science guided by consciousness.

How do you define consciousness? **JJ:** Consciousness is more than the flow of sodium ions in your brain. Consciousness is a field of energy, that establishes a holistic experience, not limited to the third or fourth dimensions. The ancients would call the field "divine spirit" as a function of the Holy Spirit, which encompasses the whole field of mental, physical, and spiritual functions, providing visionary inputs that take us into the reality of a multidimensional universe.

DH: The movie called *Interstellar* (2014), directed by Christopher Nolan, is very much like what we are talking about. I hope we do not have to go to that extreme, where the whole planet was falling apart. However, in the movie the main actor had to communicate from the fifth dimension to help provide his daughter with crucial information in order to save the planet, but we would say that we have cosmic cousins who are trying to help us in a similar way. Specifically, there are other divine realms of

intelligence trying to give us the information and say, “Hey, stop it. Wake up.” However, if they came and just did it all for us, it wouldn’t be our experience of growth.

JJ: We are, in a sense, in consciousness oneness with the Universal Mind. We can share in a divine and human partnership. We are also sparks of the Divine in human form waking up to the awesome powers of the universe. As humanity, we are now graduating from the old paradigms of control into one where we will have free energy and free speech in terms of higher scientific wisdom that allows our mind to enter into greater levels of spiritual evolution. Ultimately, we will behold cosmic contact with other civilizations that have gone beyond the quagmire of planets like ours. They will reveal to us the breakthroughs we need, but we must implement them ourselves as we engineer new possibilities of life.

Are you optimistic in the face of contemporary environmental and political problems? **DH**: Like Jesus, we would say, let us pay to Caesar what is Caesar’s. We prefer not to become involved in politics. It must come down to each individual and their inner guidance trying to create a better world.

JJ: We are in a cosmic dialectic between formation and transformation, so there will always be those elements pulling humanity down to the lowest levels of consciousness and those elements seeking to go upwards into a greater cosmic reality. We try to stay on the positive side. We can use the gifts of inductive linkage or the “mind reach” when we realize we are vessels and vehicles that have a universal linkage to the Divine. We are here to experience the human dimension and be in partnership with the divine dimension to open new doors in spite of the dinosaurs that will have to die off, and the old paradigms that have to fall away. **DH**: We know we are living in a vast and awesome universe and are part of a greater Creation. We can sit and complain about all the negative scenarios, or we can move ourselves to be part of a higher Divine Plan. We are learning, we are growing, and we are positively not alone.

What does your AFS organization do? How is it funded? Where are you headed with that? **DH**: The Academy for Future Science is an international non-governmental organization. We have publications in over 20 different languages and we work all over the world, both for the environment, as well as for a greater consciousness understanding. We try to provide a higher, holistic cosmology. **JJ**: We also work in support of the

UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to raise the consciousness of humanity, helping people in developing countries to close the digital, education, and gender gap. The global commons is a place where people can open the doors through the internet to a positive future in spite of negative scenarios that come from the media that is entrenched in negative or dualistic thinking.

DH: People can find us on our main websites: keysofenoch.org and futurescience.org. **JJ**: Our graphic video films *The Merkabah* and *The Light Body* give an experience of swimming in hyperspace, being able to go into different dimensions through different scenarios of sacred geometry, color, and historic reality.

DH: In addition to great videos, we have inspiring musical recordings that incorporate the Western and Eastern traditions, from singers and musicians living in Europe, South Africa, South America, and the USA. **JJ:** We have worked with Carlos Santana to share positive, spiritual inspirations. In terms of recording, we worked with Alice Coltrane and Jocelyn Smith, some of the great musicians and singers of our contemporary society who also have higher consciousness awakening. Music allows us to become metahumans and cosmic humans. Music opens the heart of compassion and opens the higher mind and can be a universal message for humanity and the divine spark within all of life. So we want to open the door for all to realize we have a vast library of teaching that covers the scientific, the social, the psychological, as well as the traditional spiritual, which is being raised to a new level of co-participation.

DH: We have individuals who study our work. We have web talks, as well as different facilitators who share our cosmology of science and the ancient philosophy of the Bible. We put the two together because there really is no separation between past, present, and future and between science and religion. It is all part of a higher cosmology of divine truth. **JJ**: We have other books I would like to recommend, one of which is entitled *The Overself Awakening*. **DH**: This book that we co-wrote is about 72 phases of personal consciousness growth, showing the process that many people experience in their search for higher consciousness. **JJ**: It shows how our psyche can think and work multi-dimensionally.

What do you do to renew yourself in the face of all this work? **JJ**: We meditate in the morning and the evening. Meditation is a methodology for connecting you with The All and that we invite all people to do in their own

way, whether in silence, with music, or focusing on the trouble spots of Mother Earth. It is important to realize that we are here to heal the divisions and come up with solutions. We are also here on Mother Earth to learn certain lessons and overcome challenges that brought us into incarnation. As we solve these problems, we believe we will graduate as cosmic citizens and, ultimately, work in the University of the Cosmos. We need to be prepared for the great drama when humanity fully wakes up to its multidimensional existence.

DH: Meditation is important for everyone, whether it be accomplished through prayer or sitting in silence, whatever your tradition. However, even if you are just quiet for just a little while, you align yourself with the greater Cosmos. Then you can also open your heart chakra, which allows the cells inside your body to take a moment to breathe and relax in this alignment. Meditation can be used for attaining higher states of consciousness, connecting to the Divine as well as for healing the body as we are constantly exposed to pollution from Wi-Fi networks, etc. We need to take time to allow our body, our mind, and our soul-spirit to realign, otherwise, we are going to be caught in the chaos and there is probably going to be more and more chaos with climate change and other planetary events.

What do you do for fun? **JJ:** Our fun is in our service to humanity. Fun is when you feel the heartbeat of children in Africa and South America or you feel people change who experienced hostility. We created textbooks that provide some answers to the historic questions of life and which show how we are all interconnected. In the end, we discover that we are truly living sons and daughters of the Divine Being, discovering ourselves in the Infinite Way of Creation.

DH: Now some scientists are coming into agreement that we are here not from a Big Bang of randomness, but a patterning associated with a specific unfoldment of the forces of nature, just as our body has signs of the Fibonacci spiral that can be seen in our hands or the cochlea of our ear. It's the Spiral of Life associated with the Fibonacci series or the Golden Mean that seems to be in the geometry of spiral galaxies. The Mayans talked about *Ix Zakal Nok*, the Lady Cloth Weaver, since the ancients saw in the complex star patterns of the heavens, certain specific—not random—patternings. As the same sacred geometry appears within us, we see how we

are all interconnected. It's important that we find a balance between what is within and without, as well as above, below, and around us.

JJ: We feel a new garment is now arising, a multidimensional garment that will allow us to participate more fully within the realms of the Divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit. We've illustrated this in *The 72 Sacred Names of the Myriad Expressions of The Divine Mother*. This anthropological study of sacred language and sacred geometry includes the 12 major cultures of the world. In all, we must discover within and without, that we are divine sparks connected to each other and to every level of Life, from the micro-universe to the macro-universe of the Godhead. Soon we will understand our ultimate Being!

Books

Giza's Industrial Complex, 2019 (with James Brown)
Mind Dynamics in Space and Time, 2016 (with Elizabeth Rauscher)
The 72 Sacred Names of the Myriad Expressions of The Divine Mother, 2015
The Overself Awakening, 2011
The Seventy-Two Living Divine Names of the Most High, 2009
The Gospel of Mary: A Text of Mary Magdalene with Commentary, 2008
End of Suffering, 2006 (with Russell Targ)
Consciousness, Energy and Future Science, 2002
Pistis Sophia, Text and Commentary, 1999
The Book of Knowledge: The Keys of Enoch®, 1973

Videos

Gates of Light, 2016
Voice of Africa, 2015
Initiation, 2003
Cosmic Destiny, 2000
The Light Body, 1999
Merkabah, Voyage of a Star Seed, 1997

David Luke, Ph.D.

Altered States and Exceptional Experiences

Photo by Adam Malone

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

"Psychedelic substances can help us understand the underlying neurobiological processes at work in exceptional experiences." Explain these processes. What does Anomalistic Psychology study?

What personality types are more likely to have psi experiences?

Define "panpsychism." Do you tend to be a materialist or idealist in your view of consciousness?

How do Eastern and Western cultures tend to differ in their views of consciousness?

I was born February 12, 1972, in Leicester in the Midlands in the slap-bang center of England. *You're an Aquarian.* I'm the youngest of seven. W*ere you raised as a devout Catholic boy?* I was raised Catholic but I became disinterested with it after my confirmation at age 11. It didn't answer enough of the questions I had and I saw it as a bit of a construct, so I quietly moved away from Catholicism. *Eleven is young to be thinking that abstractly.* I was always asking big questions, which I never had answers to so. *Where did you find some of the answers?* I started reading lots of left-field science books. I would often just bunk off school and go to the secondhand bookshop in town and read the bookshelf with all the mystical science, parapsychological and psychical research—Lyle Watson's *Supernature: A Natural History of the Supernatural* was the classic book.

In high school were you a mod or a rocker? I was very much a rocker for sure; we had a group of us about five or six, for safety in numbers as we were all bullied for being freaks—although being non-conventional might be considered conventional in its own way. *Why did you decide to go to university to study psychology?* I got thrown out of college but then I developed an interest in psychology and psychedelics in particular. *Why did you get tossed out of college? College like US secondary school?* Yes, because I wasn't doing much work and my mock exams were pretty bad. I was just having a good time and growing marijuana in the common room didn't help. I looked at it as a science experiment. That was the final straw. *How did you get accepted to university? You did well on A-levels?* I didn't take my exams first time 'round and then I spent a couple of years working on the road and running nightclubs. Then I went back to night school and got some qualifications to go to university.

Were you a musician yourself? No, but I always wanted to be. I thought my primary calling was to be a rock star but I didn't actually play any musical instruments and that didn't help so I had to find an alternative career. I thought psychology could explain some of the more wild mystical experiences and so I went away specifically to study psychology, to try and understand the psychedelic experience. Of course, I was disappointed when I got to university and did my psychology degree and learned practically nothing about mystical or psychedelic experiences.

A lot of scientists I've interviewed are meditators who find it helps make things easier when they're going against the current. I spent a lot of

time doing yoga. I studied it fairly intensively for a few years and I kept on my practice although I don't have much of a practice these days because I juggle three part-time jobs and a three-year-old child. I very much value Eastern meditative traditions and esoteric traditions as well.

You've written, co-written or edited 10 books, 28 peer-reviewed journal articles, 33 book chapters, 11 book reviews and 13 review articles. You teach at the University of Greenwich; are an Honorary Lecturer at Imperial College; you've been President of the Parapsychological Association; are Director of the Ecology, Cosmos, and Consciousness Salon at the Institute of Ecotechnics; and are a co-founder and director of Breaking Convention: Multidisciplinary Conference on Psychedelic Consciousness; plus you have a child and a wife. How do you manage to do all that?

I guess I don't have much of a social life; I'm not entirely sure. Working at a mainstream university I figured I had to work harder to establish myself because I was in two taboo research areas—psychedelic research and parapsychology. I enjoy the research and the work I've done has its own internal engine or motivation mechanisms. *Do you not sleep very much?* Right, I was averaging about five hours a night for the first 18 months after the baby was born and now I'm at a whopping six or seven hours a night now, but I don't have days off very often. I think once you've had prolonged sleep deprivation it's hard to revert to actually having a decent amount of sleep again, so I've gotten used to it.

You teach a course on parapsychology; why does the university let you teach it? It's called "Psychology and Exceptional Human Experience." I was lucky in that somebody in the Psychology Department was researching a little about parapsychology. I ended up taking his job when he left and started my own course about 10 years ago that is always over-subscribed, so the Department seems to be happy with it and they like the diversity I suppose. I think privately some of the people in the Department think it's a bit bonkers but these days I think my peers somewhat accept me for my work. I never had too much resistance to it because it's intrinsically interesting.

Parapsychology started at Edinburgh with Robert Morris as the Koestler endowed Chair of Parapsychology in 1985 and his grad students spread through the UK? It started before that in 1882 with the formation of the Society for Psychical Research, but it was never an academic subject

until the endowed chair in parapsychology. I think Morris supervised maybe 30 or 40 Ph.D. students and John Beloff also supervised a lot of Edinburgh students who spawned their own Ph.D. students like myself. We're at the fourth and fifth generation now of people who study parapsychology within the academic system in the UK and are teaching or researching at about 15 universities, so it's fairly well embedded in the UK academic system.

I heard that Edinburgh doesn't do much of that work anymore. Sadly, after Bob Morris died in 2004, the chair initially was not filled. They used the endowment to employ two senior lecturers, one of whom, Caroline Watt, became a professor and then in 2016 she adopted the endowed chair. I think she supervises a couple of Ph.D. students but it's nothing like it was in scope and grandeur of the Bob Morris days. Now the University of Northampton assumes that pivotal role with Professor Chris Roe*, who has a team of academic staff and Ph.D. students researching parapsychology and transpersonal psychology.

It may be obvious, but why do parapsychology researchers also teach transpersonal psychology? They're quite different in their approach although they explore anomalous or exceptional experiences or parapsychological experiences. Transpersonal psychology is probably broader, including a whole range of spiritual experiences that parapsychology may not delve into. Parapsychology is rooted in the empirical approach and looks to understand the underlying mechanisms of psi and related phenomena and also to establish the reality of it. Transpersonal psychology is more interested in the transformative process of how having a transpersonal experience can develop the individual as a transpersonal being.

What led to your interest in psychedelics? Is it fair to assume that you experimented with ayahuasca and LSD? I always had a proclivity for exploring altered states and am fascinated by all of the states of consciousness. I don't just research psychedelics; the broader area is altered states and exceptional experiences. I got particularly interested in psychedelics as a teenager and that interest has continued both on a personal level and on a research level with various experiments. I did research on ayahuasca in South America and have spent a lot of time working with indigenous tribes, such as those in Mexico, who make use of peyote. I've run clinical drug trials with LSD in hospitals and experiments in laboratories, and have also done research with DMT. I've done a lot of

lab and personal research exploring psychedelics and think they're hugely of interest.

Psychedelic substances can help us understand the underlying neurobiological processes at work in exceptional experiences. One thing they may show us is that the brain is not so much a producer of consciousness, but rather a receiver of consciousness and acts like a reducing valve. It's been suggested that psychedelics are agents that can turn off the reducing valve of the brain to allow you access to what is called Mind-at-Large. I don't think materialist reductionism is adequate for explaining the mind-body relationship. I'm not sure any explanation is adequate since consciousness is an enigma. I think the filter theory is worth exploring although it suggests a dualism in that mind and body are somehow separate. The data would seem to suggest that you can have extended mind experiences of consciousness even beyond the brain itself. That would seem to suggest that the brain doesn't necessarily produce consciousness, which is just a working hypothesis.

My goal is to find the mechanisms and processes by which we can have genuine experiences of extended mind and discover what's going on in the brain in those situations. What are the parallels between the neurobiology of psychedelic experiences that give rise to exceptional experiences and other induction mechanisms such as through meditation, hypnosis, floatation tanks or NDEs, and so on? Aldous Huxley famously said psychedelics are not the cause of mystical experiences as they're merely the occasion. To just look to the brain as the complete explanation of the experience is somewhat limiting, particularly when these experiences sometimes seem to indicate people are having genuine non-brain mediated experiences of exceptional kinds, be it OBEs with veridical visions, or experiences of telepathy or precognition. Look at the evidence of congenitally blind people having an NDE where they report seeing things for the first time in their lives. How does that actually occur? I look to the anomalies in the data; most of my research and experiments are steered in that direction.

If you were pressed to define what that consciousness is that people have a glimpse of in altered states, what would you guess it is? I try to remain agnostic for all intents and purposes, but I find a materialist explanation is deeply unsatisfactory. I'm not sure that the alternatives are well enough fleshed out either. It's the old "hard problem of consciousness"

but I'm not convinced by materialism and I'm open to other explanations such as panpsychism or dualism. Panpsychism is a middle ground that suggests that everything is inherently conscious, perhaps even down to quarks. It usually draws the line at saying sofas and wardrobes are conscious but I would argue that that the grounds for drawing the line are not well-established either.

For instance, the human organism is composed of trillions of cells and yet we experience it as being an individual and trillions of those cells are not even of human origin. They're viruses, bacteria, fungi, protists, and archaea. Panpsychism is a useful concept and I think it's gaining acceptance in philosophy and even within neuroscience as a possible means of looking at the mind-body problem. I try to be truly agnostic and be open to all possible explanations and perceive the limitations in all of them.

In NDEs and mystical experiences, there's often an enormous feeling of love, which implies something transcendental. Perhaps consciousness is in some ways related to love? It's certainly something that pops up a lot in mystical experiences and love itself is a quale, an aspect of consciousness that doesn't easily fit into a materialist perspective. Love is something to be explored as are a number of other conundrums of the human condition, but it even transcends the human condition. We can experience love as though the universe has love for us as well.

Also, we find that people who have profound mystical experiences tend to have personality changes as well, in that they tend to be more compassionate and more empathic. They have more concern for nature and the people around them and they tend to have more openness for experience, which would seem to be driven by this force of love, however undefinable that is. *Some people call it God.* God's a tricky concept to stick into a scientific topic, almost as tricky as love. But love is a good denominator.

What were the most difficult experiences in your life and how did you cope? The usual existential questions on a personal level wondering who are we, what are we, and what are we doing on the planet, in the universe? The ontological challenges are the ones that I chew over on a daily basis and have never fully received answers. As a young adult, those existential questions about identity and who I am were usually more on a social and psychological level but I tend to think more of the larger ontological

questions these days. What is the nature of reality itself? I think as long as we are constantly asking that question it is deeply nourishing.

The quest for understanding or the search for truth creates its own meaning. It gives existence meaning in a world in which it feels like meaning is constantly being stripped away by materialist reductionism. Everything is meaningless, according to social materialism, as in capitalism with its constant acquisition and perpetual economic growth. The search itself becomes meaningful, so on a personal level, those are some of the big questions and problems.

On a professional level, just coping and struggling with working in some pretty taboo research areas can be challenging. I've always found that challenge is a game because I started off with very low expectations and have always been astonished with how much I could get away with and how far into left field you can take your research and still maintain some academic respectability and position. *I taught Women's Studies where people think of you as some radical weird professor so it gives you a fair amount of freedom.* Absolutely. *They're not surprised whatever you do.*

However, funding is in short supply, certainly, but I'm always amazed that there is still some amount of intellectual freedom within the academy, although it seems to be diminishing. I think it's becoming increasingly more challenging as universities in the UK are becoming more and more corporate, so pure intellectual pursuits are disappearing like philosophy departments and anthropology in the humanities. These subjects are evaporating as universities become more geared towards applied and industrial research and bringing in grants. *It's the same in the US.*

In your own personal use of psychedelics did you experience this bliss and love expansion? You also hear about people who are terrified and see demons. Absolutely. Humphry Osmond, the English psychiatrist, gave Aldous Huxley mescaline and together they coined the term "psychedelic," meaning mind manifesting. Osmond came up with this little rhyme to go along with it: "To fathom hell or soar angelic, just take a pinch of psychedelic," so it can take you to either extreme. I would say typically people tend to have more positive experiences and a lot of that has to do with the context in which you take them and the preparation you've had.

I also think that to soar to the heavens you also have to plumb the depths—the deeper into the shadow, the higher you can fly. To do any mystical work with oneself, to ignore the shadow is limiting and probably

an impossibility. Unless you've done the work and gone deep into those terrifying and traumatic spaces, you can't get that elevated. I think the expectation that it should only be blissful is a limiting factor and to be prepared for terrifying moments.

Carl Jung explained that if you don't become conscious of the shadow you project it and it governs your life in lots of unconscious ways. Absolutely and I think that's the benefit of doing this work, not just with psychedelics, but this deep psychological process with meditation or whatever path where you confront the shadow and dig deep into those psychologically sticky areas. Otherwise, they can be the things that you drag around with you throughout your whole life and don't actually engage. Typically, in a psychedelic psychotherapeutic session, people will go to very dark spaces and then hopefully find some resolution and catharsis to come through into a more blissful state. In the period of one psychedelic experience, you can plumb the depths and soar angelic.

Michael Pollan at UC Berkeley writes about the use of psychedelics to cope with depression and anxiety. What's your experience with using those drugs for depression and anxiety, which is an increasing problem for young people, especially for girls? Yes, anxiety and depression are modern epidemics and I think they're increasing. Psychiatry is somewhat in crisis, unlike other areas of medicine that have steadily progressed over the last hundred years. My psychiatric colleagues tell me the best treatment for depression is still electroconvulsive therapy which has terrible side effects. Psychiatry is very much in the early stages of development. The drugs are only slightly better than placebo; they take several weeks to start working; have terrible side effects, and they're addictive.

The preliminary research with psychedelics is extremely promising in treating difficult psychogenic disorders like depression, anxiety, and addictions. I haven't used them for that particular purpose but certainly, the research is extremely promising. That's how they were explored initially in the '50s and '60s but they've been dormant for 40 to 50 years. Now we're seeing this interest in psychedelics both clinically and as research tools, so I think it's promising.

What part of the brain do they act upon to alleviate depression, anxiety, etc.? I don't think that's well understood because the neuroimaging research is still very much in the early stages. Some of the early findings would suggest that they work in opposite ways to classic antidepressants

like SSRIs which seem to deaden your emotional responses. Instead, you have an intensification of your emotional response, which can lift people out of their repetitive negative thought loops. We also find that there's an increase of activity in the frontal cortex, the rumination in depression of going over the same loops where nothing seems to lift you out of it.

Psychedelics reduce activity in the frontal cortex so that may be one of the mechanisms. They also stimulate neurogenesis, the development of new neural connections, as well as the brain laying down new memory traces. There are various rudimentary theories about how they may act to reduce something like depression in the brain but it's still preliminary because they work in numerous ways in the brain.

They also disrupt this central hub function of what's called a default mode network, which is like your ego-control mechanism, and open up unconstrained cognition so that you have hyper-connectivity between different brain regions. There's a huge degree of novelty which comes out of a psychedelic experience that can contribute to reducing depression. Those various brain mechanisms haven't been directly explored in a prospective way, but are beginning to be explored. What we do know is that in the preliminary research studies they tend to reduce depression fairly effectively—better than anything else that we currently have.

In a *nutshell, the way they work is by disrupting that negative loop of "my life is miserable," my life is blah blah blah?"* Yes, they interrupt the loop but that may not be the only mechanism as there may be psychological factors as well. For instance, people who have a full-blown mystical experience tend to have better clinical outcomes, so there may be an underlying biological mechanism for those mystical experiences. The people who experience, "Oh wow, I met God," or "I am God," are the ones who have better outcomes, less likely to have depression, or less likely to have addiction remission. If they have end-of-life cancer, they're less likely to have fear of death. Something about that "Oh, wow" experience has clinical implications as well as some of the underlying psychobiological effects as well.

That's like depressed people who try to commit suicide and have an NDE and come back upbeat? [*See Penny Sartori**] Yes, there is a huge degree of overlap between the NDEs and the profound psychedelic experiences. There's a lot to explore in the nature of the NDE as a

spontaneous mystical experience and how it relates to psychedelic experiences that attempt to induce mystical experiences.

Does DMT have the same effect as ayahuasca? Not exactly but ayahuasca contains DMT, which is thought to be the primary psychoactive component of ayahuasca. So it's in a way like an oral DMT. DMT doesn't work orally but if you mix a plant containing DMT with the plant containing MAOIs (monoamine oxidase inhibitors), which stops the enzyme in your stomach from breaking down the DMT, that can get to the brain but the MAO inhibitors in themselves are also psychoactive. It's thought that the primary experience derived from ayahuasca is through the DMT.

What's the difference between DMT, LSD, and magic mushrooms and what is used most often in lab experiments? LSD belongs to the same category as chemicals like DMT, it's in the tryptamine family, which means it's serotonergic. Tryptamine psychedelics seem to primarily work on the serotonergic system. LSD is much more of a complex molecule; it's derived from nature but given a few chemical twists and turns. Psilocybin is actually a type of DMT that converts in the body into psilocin, which is also found in psilocybin-containing mushrooms. Psilocin is 4-hydroxy-dimethyltryptamine (4-HO-DMT). It's in the DMT family and DMT occurs widely in nature, in humans, mammals, many plants, and other species but it doesn't occur in fungus.

Fungi have its own versions which are psilocybin and psilocin and it's very similar in terms of the experience you have, but psilocybin, unlike DMT, is orally active. If you were to chew on chacruna which contains high levels of DMT, you could eat it all day long and you're not going to have a trip unless you mix it with some other plants to activate the DMT, whereas mushrooms are like an orally active DMT.

Your research has mostly been with ayahuasca? LSD, ayahuasca, peyote, San Pedro (both are mescaline) and psilocybin—across the board really. Also some of the more obscure substances as well but most of my experimental work has looked at these classic psychedelics. *When I was young, people told stories about how someone took LSD and they spent the rest of their life thinking they were an orange, so how do you prevent drugs disorganizing the brain in a permanent way?* Back in the '60s in the media hysteria about psychedelics, they focused on bad trips or negative psychological experiences. Now that we're a bit more educated and it's 75

years down the line with LSD, we know more about the substances and can reduce the number of bad trips or difficult psychological experiences through paying attention to the setting, so we don't see long-term detrimental changes within a clinical context. We're also better educated in how to integrate psychedelic experiences.

Recent research with two huge epidemiological surveys in the States included 130,000 people each and both found the same thing—people who've taken recreational drugs tend to have worse mental health, apart from psychedelics. People who've taken psychedelics didn't have any worse mental health conditions than the general population and by some measures, they had better mental health. People who had taken psilocybin were less likely to have had psychiatric medication in the last year or have been a psychiatric inpatient.

If psychedelics induced psychosis to any large extent then we would see the epidemiological signals. Across the population, there's no tendency for people to have poor mental health outcomes because they've taken psychedelics. However, we do know that there are people who tripped once and spend the rest of their life thinking they were an orange, indicating that some people may have a genetic proclivity to develop psychosis.

You did a study with LSD to produce synesthesia-like experiences, where when I hear the note E, I see a color like green? Yes, the stimulation of one sensory experience has a concomitant experience in a different sense modality. We find this is a congenital condition in about maybe 2% to 3% of the population. The most common type is when numbers and letters or days of the week are associated with colors. It's one of those things that gets quoted a lot in the literature—people having synesthesia on psychedelics—but there was actually very little research. Myself and a colleague, Devin Terhune, made a large survey of people who had taken drugs and found that particularly psychedelics had a proclivity to induce synesthesia-like experiences. The number one drug was LSD—58% of people who had taken LSD had an experience of synesthesia. *Only when they were tripping?* Exactly. Occasionally you get it with meditation, hypnosis, and a few other altered states but not very often, but quite frequently with psychedelics.

The most common variety was seeing sounds, so typically a sound would have a visual analogue, usually very colorful geometric patterns, very colorful, so if you're listening to music you would get these beautiful geometric patterns that would move and change form with the music. *Have*

you experienced that? That sounds like fun. Yes, I'm lucky to have had those experiences. Sometimes they can get more complex so that you're not only seeing the music but you can taste it and feel it like your whole body is the music. You feel like all the molecules and atoms in your body are resonating with the sound. *That's the idea of getting rid of brain barriers and filtering.* Yes, you tend to dissolve your subject/object divide; you just become sound in an extremely beautiful experience.

You've written that cave art is more than meets the eye and relates to your work. I was looking into the nature of entoptics, geometric patterns that people see in altered states of consciousness, especially with psychedelics. These are very common psychedelic experiences but you also experience them during hypnagogia, hypnosis, meditation, etc. Some archaeologists explain Upper Paleolithic rock art with entoptics, suggesting the cave artists were in altered states of consciousness because there was a universality and a proclivity for these geometric patterns and motifs. *Spirals*? Yes, and zigzags and crosshatches. The rock art theory went further and assumed a reductionist viewpoint saying because these symbols are universal they're hardwired into the human brain. I took issue with that because it's just an assumption. How is it people can perceive higher spatial dimensions or geometric objects with more than three spatial dimensions? How do we explain that neurobiologically? We can't even explain visual perception.

I came across a new word in your work with psychedelomancy*, which is controlled experiments and psychedelic precognition and seeing discarnate entities with DMT.* Psychedelomancy is like mantic arts of which there are many, like cartomancy with Tarot Cards, in a system to divine the future, or bibliomancy, which uses a book to divine the future to get an answer. So psychedelolmancy is the research on the use of psychedelics for precognitive experiences. We have many anecdotal accounts of this in the literature from some of the earliest explorers and discoverers of psychedelics. There's been very little experimental research, so I've been conducting what I think are the first precognition experiments under the influence of psychedelics. They're quite abstract and follow the lines of classic parapsychology research techniques.

I've adapted one which is similar to dream precognition or Ganzfeld technique where the person in an altered state tries to visualize the target, such as a one-minute video clip. At the end, they review four video clips

which are as different from each other as possible and one of those is the target. Nobody knows what the target is because it hasn't been selected yet. The subject compares their visual imagery with those four video clips and ranks them before an RNG selects the target.

I've run several experiments so far; one was a self-experiment with mescaline with 20 trials with significant results picking the target. I ran a trial with 13 scientists on LSD which was also significant but weirdly in the opposite direction as they rated the actual target the lowest significantly. *Do you think their intent was: I'm a skeptic so I'm not going to get this right?* Maybe not consciously but it's interesting that all but one or two of them were very skeptical, very much materialist scientists. I'm replicating again with DMT, but with non-scientists because I think they're bad test subjects.

You've done work in ethnography and wrote Talking with the Spirits. *What have you found about how shamans do their journeying?* I've spent time working with various shamans and doing participant observation. Shamans are magic-spiritual practitioners who go into an altered state at will, in the name of their community, to transcend time and space to bring back useful information from those realms. According to Stan Krippner's great little mnemonic, they may travel through drumming, diet, dancing, dreaming, or with drugs.

Drugs are probably the least common method but on every continent, shamans have made use of psychoactive plants and fungi, and occasionally animals as well. Shamans undergo many years of training. Some may have gotten very ill themselves to the point of nearly dying and recovered and had a calling to do the very challenging training. Classically trained *ayahuasceros* in South America spend two years dieting and eating nothing but plantains and dried fish and drinking ayahuasca. They may eat bark off a specific tree, perhaps for a month or more, to understand these doctor trees. In the Wixarika mara'akames use of peyote, training is a minimum of 12 years before you become a master.

People in the West talk about having shamanic experiences but it's not the same thing as being a shaman, which is a huge undertaking and a great burden. They live and exist in this space between the worlds often at great personal sacrifice. One of their roles is healing the planet and they're the caretakers of the environment and of their communities. They have to go between the spirits of nature and the human world and they have responsibilities to all of those, so they're the ontological middle men and

women between the worlds. It's typically a lifelong job and a great commitment.

A lot of us read Carlos Castaneda's accounts of working with Yaqui Don Juan: How accurate was that? There's a lot of debate as it's semi-fictional but the essence of it's very real; according to my observation of shamans, that's how they exist in magical reality. About the same time that Castaneda was doing his Ph.D. thesis, Michael Harner was also doing his, working with the Schuar tribe in Peru and Ecuador. His accounts are no less fantastical than the teachings of Don Juan, but his are thought to be bona fide anthropological research. Harner and Castaneda pretty much split the world of anthropology in half by doing participant observation research. The anthropology of consciousness as a sub-discipline was born, supported by people who believed that these extraordinary phenomena shouldn't be explained away because it was the ultimate ethnocentrism to merely discount these things as primitive thinking.

How good is your Spanish and how did you contact those tribes in Mexico? I've been visiting Mexico for 20 years and it took me a long time to connect with some of the indigenous tribes. I've only been working with the Wixarika for the last six years when they began to open up more to foreigners because they were going to lose their sacred cosmological topography to opencast mining for minerals. They have a translator who speaks at least five languages and we're good friends. My Spanish is improving.

Were they resistant to you at first or did they think you could help preserve the land? They were very welcoming, although it's been a divisive issue in their communities about how much they interact with outsiders. Their entire culture is based around the use of peyote and so it would have been the end of their culture and their medicine if they couldn't harvest the cactus. They managed eventually to get an injunction against the mining, which is still in a dormant stage. The whole community takes peyote, including the children from about the age of five. It's the core of their whole existence, similar to Tibetan Buddhism where every family will have a Buddhist monk. I'd say around 20% of them are shamans, so it's one of their main occupations and they're also subsistence farmers.

Do the shamans think that we're going to make it as a species? I think they're terrified, which is part of why they're opening up. You find this with indigenous cultures the world over that they are very willing suddenly to

share their wisdom with outsiders because they realize that the time is not for hiding away anymore since we are at a crisis point ecologically. The rest of the world needs to make use of their traditions and wisdom and connection with nature. *Are you going to write a book about that?* The next one is going to be a more personal journey. *Where else have you worked with indigenous people besides Mexico?* Mostly in Mexico but I've done field trips to Madagascar, Brazil, Ecuador, and India researching shamanism and mediumship trance possession.

Did you find that the mediums were accurate and it seemed like they were communicating with disincarnate entities? From what I could gather the mediums gave life advice but I don't know the accuracy. I've never had such a deep exploration of indigenous practices of mediumship that revealed anything astonishing. For instance, in Madagascar the medium, Trumba, talked about my ancestors who were crocodiles; it doesn't necessarily translate because they have a very different cosmology.

Some psychologists say altered states and psi phenomena are just hallucinations or psychoses of a disturbed brain. What's your take on the physiology of extraordinary experiences? Historically it's been an easy way of explaining them away as just delusion and defective brains. I think it's incumbent upon psychologists who want to understand the full range of human experience to identify, categorize, and classify all the different states. One of the things I'm doing is using the same measures across different states of consciousness, which hasn't been done before. So looking at psychedelic experiences, darkroom anechoic chambers, breath work, flotation tanks, and so on, using the same measures to understand the underlying neurobiological mechanisms.

Charles Laughlin is an anthropologist and neuroscientist who defines Western cultures as monophasic cultures where we only value the ordinary everyday waking state of consciousness, while anything else is demonized or considered delusion. Polyphasic cultures value altered states of consciousness as sources of important information as much as, and sometimes more than, the ordinary waking state of consciousness. Think of Eastern traditions or shamanic cultures that value their dreams. The Schuar get up in the middle of the night and share their dreams as a family and they'll base important decisions for the rest of the day on a particularly auspicious dream—it doesn't matter if it's a child or an elder. There's so

much more we can understand by looking at the full scope of human experience.

Do you think this split goes along with being patriarchal and valuing left-brain over whole brain? The antecedents of this are very old and started with the patriarchy several thousand years ago and continued with monotheism. Out of that grew the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution. We wouldn't have had the Scientific Revolution if not for monotheism. Psi phenomena were demonized, literally, in Christianity and then science did the job of labeling altered states as hallucination until Freud brought dreams back into the conversation but he had no time for exceptional experiences. Carl Jung picked up the baton and carried on with it, so we're fighting a long tradition of demonizing exceptional experiences.

Witches were usually women, which goes along with the fear of the feminine and, similarly, the fear of the irrational or unknown. One of the reasons we don't have interest in the occult, altered states of consciousness, or psychedelics in the West is because of the legacy of the Inquisition, which continued with the "Scientific Inquisition." Parapsychology is still just outcast for no other reason than prejudice. A few very vocal skeptics within the academy do a concerted job of ridiculing and rejecting it *a priori*, which is counter to everything their science should stand for, but the academy has become somewhat ossified and dogmatic.

You could say the same thing about quantum physics as when Einstein dismissed non-local entanglement as "weird spooky action at a distance;" a lot of quantum physics isn't "sensible" either. You look solid to me but you're mostly empty. It's extraordinary because the biggest critics of parapsychology are usually psychologists but obviously, those skeptics haven't caught up with physics, which makes parapsychology look like a tea party. It's so astonishingly strange with spooky action at a distance, nonlocality, multiple worlds, 11 or 13 dimensions of space-time, and time symmetry, i.e., time goes forwards and backwards.

Skeptics use the words "pseudoscience" or "woo-woo" to mean they don't even have to look at the research, as a skeptic mentioned in the Introduction stated, "Pigs can't fly so why study flying pigs?" *I wonder what personal fears generate that lack of rationality? Are they afraid of discovering non-logical parts of their psyches?* Anomalistic psychology is the branch of psychology that looks at parapsychological phenomena from a mainstream perspective, which is a materialist reductionist perspective

that there is no paranormal and everything can be easily explained by current scientific understanding.

They explain parapsychological phenomena as due to faulty cognitions, memory, or perceptual deficits, etc. By inference then, they're saying I'm smart and sane and logical because I don't believe in this stuff, look at how clever I am. *It seems to me that a fair amount of male academics were "nerds" in secondary school so they weren't popular and now prove themselves as "I'm Dr. X and I know all this stuff so I'm not a wimpy boy anymore."* It verges on ridicule, which you wouldn't get away within mental health research.

It's tempting to say we can explain clairvoyance and healing from a distance by quantum non-locality, but physicists say we don't know what causes that bond between entangled particles. At the moment nobody understands quantum physics and so using it to explain psi isn't satisfactory, although physics opens up the possibility of non-local communication on the level of the organism. Also, time goes backwards as well as forwards in the equations of physics but we disregard those solutions where time goes backwards because that's not in accord with our everyday experience.

Yet precognition and presentiment would seem to be evidence for those anomalies whereby information transfer goes backwards in time. There are several physicists working in our field, such as Peter Bancel, Ed May and Brian Josephson.* If we understand the nature of psi and we come up with a good theory that combines physics and psychology, we may understand the hard problem of consciousness and the mind-body problem.

The hard problem of consciousness is we don't know if consciousness or matter came first. It's more to do with what is the nature of mind and what is the nature of body and how do consciousness and the material world interact? Materialists would say everything's just physical and consciousness is an illusion. The idealist says everything's consciousness and the material worlds is an illusion. A strict dualist would say there's mind and body; these two are separate but they somehow interact, but nobody has a satisfactory explanation of how mind and matter interact. It's been a conundrum for a couple of thousand years at the very least.

I think there's a lot to be said for the primacy of consciousness; it certainly can't be disregarded as any less important than the physical, just from the very fact that our whole experience of the world is our consciousness. Empiricism is the study of the world through empirical

senses so everything is experienced ultimately. If you try being an idealist and stepping out in front of a bus you're going to have a very physical experience. It's a conundrum so I don't pretend to have a hint of an idea of how to rationalize or make these two seemingly disparate things compatible.

In Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi, *he describes gurus seen being two places at once, as is reported about shamans too, so there's not a clear boundary between the physical and spirit*. Padre and Saint Pio was an Italian Catholic priest (1887 to 1968) who upset the Vatican because he kept performing miracles like stigmata and levitating during mass. His congregation would see him even though he bilocated hundreds of miles away. *This implies we have an astral body and when people see ghosts they are seeing an energy body.* You can look to poltergeist phenomena but it's not certain what that is.

The simplest explanation is these are experiences of consciousness so when people talk about seeing ghosts or getting abducted by aliens I don't necessarily think the ghosts are physical or there are aliens in UFOs, rather they exist in the realm of consciousness. *Harvard professor John Mack worked with abductees who sometimes have physical implants so that's not just consciousness.* The nature of consciousness can be so powerful; hypnosis tells us that we can affect our bodies in extraordinary ways through our minds. Some people are highly suggestible so you can pretend to put a cigarette out on their skin and their skin will blister. We don't know the limits of what our minds can make our bodies do. People have extraordinary recoveries from terminal illnesses, so the limits of the mind over one's body are unknown.

Interesting people to study are those with Dissociative Identity Disorder, where one alter can have a disease and the other doesn't. There's a great book by Edward Kelly and Emily Kelly, called *Irreducible Mind* where they explore extraordinary phenomena like that in some detail. It's in the same category of people having heart and other organ transplants and adopting part of the personality of the donor. Twenty years ago consciousness research was unheard of apart from a handful of far-out research and now it's a huge portion of academic interest. You can't ignore all of this extraordinary phenomena, therefore mainstream neuroscience is now beginning to look at these exceptional experiences as well, although they assume there are brain-based explanations for everything. However,

the genie is out of the bottle, as is also true for psychedelic research; after a fifty-year hiatus, it's now a hot-button topic. Research with psychedelics and brain imaging is some of the most cited research we've had in the last few years.

Please explain schizotypy as a predisposition to psi experiences. They have a special sensitivity or awareness? Schizotypy is a personality construct used as a predictor of people who are thought to develop schizophrenia, with four different constructs, one of which is unusual experiences or magical beliefs. People who score high are thought to be more likely to develop schizophrenia but only if they have all the other symptoms, including introverted anhedonia and cognitive disorganization. You do get a subsection of people who score high on schizotypy largely just because they have a lot of unusual experiences but they're otherwise normally functioning individuals—with them is called benign or positive schizotypy. Schizotypy tends to be viewed in a psychopathological way but you can have healthy schizotypy where they're more prone to having anomalous experiences.

Michael Thalborne developed the similar construct of transliminality, which tapped into those unusual experiences as well. Other people have put forward the anomaly-prone personality type and fantasy proneness has some commonality with it as well. There are various personality measures that people use to try and identify people who are more likely to have these unusual or exceptional experiences but it doesn't necessarily mean these are psychopathological. In fact, in the general population paranormal beliefs tend not to be correlated with psychological dysfunction. *Many people have had the experience of knowing person X will phone or knowing someone is staring from behind you.* Typically the majority of the population report at least one paranormal experience or belief. In Brazil, about 95% hold some paranormal beliefs, in contrast to very secular countries like Scandinavia with very low beliefs in paranormal phenomena.

Have you found a correlation between people who have these extraordinary experiences and schizotypy? Yes, because they'll score high by the very fact that one of the characteristics of schizotypy is unusual beliefs so if you've had extraordinary experiences you would naturally score high on it. What we find is people who tend to believe in the paranormal tend to have had paranormal experiences and they do much better overall on ESP tests or psi experiments. It's one of the most robust

findings from parapsychology in terms of personality variables, and meta-analyses recently again verified that. *That's common sense: If I've experienced it I tend to believe it*.

You did some research about dead people talking on radio or tape recorders. One of my students researched apophenia, like the tendency to perceive patterns in apparently random sounds and data. We tried to develop some measures of apophenia and we looked at supposedly trans-corporal communications. We looked at some so-called genuine recordings and we tried making some of our own pseudo-versions where we'd have a lot of white noise in the background and add a very faint audio with a message. We looked at which personalities were more likely to detect the sounds and found that people who tended to have more unusual experiences tended to genuinely detect the message. They were more likely to hear sounds in whatever medium we played them. *I've heard accounts of 19th century research into communication by spirits*. Sir Oliver Lodge was a Victorian scientist and spiritualist who attempted to send some communications from beyond the grave, with very lengthy research into it.

What about your study of local geomagnetic activity and the connection with Tibetan Buddhist psychic awareness of ley lines and other magnetic patterns in the earth that influence us? I collaborated with Serena Roney Dougal* who researched Indian Yogis and Tibetan Buddhist Lamas during her seven years in India in ashrams and monasteries. In the 1990s she looked at electromagnetic field fluctuations and electromagnetic sensitivity in people. [*See Rollin McCraty* and David Muesham.* *] This led her to look at biomagnetite in the pineal gland in the brain and explore the possible production of DMT in the pineal gland.

When she moved back to the UK, she began doing research in a monastery in Scotland, a mile away from one of two or three super-sensitive magnetometers in the country that look at geomagnetic field fluctuations. We were able to collect the data over a period of a few years combined with solar activity. The Earth's geomagnetic field fluctuates seasonally and is linked to solar activity such as sunspots, with a 23-year cycle. We started this research project in the wettest place in the British Isles. She bravely lived there periodically over a few years and we collected data from the observatory. Something extraordinary happened; we started in a trough in the solar flare activity at the start of a sunspot cycle and it stayed

at the bottom, not budging its flare activity for the first time in a few hundred years. It was anomalous in itself.

Our ESP experiments weren't particularly successful either, although they'd been very successful with Tibetan Buddhist monks, particularly those who meditated for at least 20 years. In Scotland, there were mostly Westerners in the monastery and we didn't get very good results. We did find that people who have sensitivity in their temporal lobes are more likely to have anomalous experiences like time slips or strange smells. Their psi scores did change in relationship to the solar fluctuations. We picked up some small signal but we didn't get to thoroughly explore this relationship to the extent we'd hoped to.

We looked at their scores in clairvoyance and precognition tests for a relationship between solar activity or geomagnetic field strength. We found a three-way relationship between people with the temporal lobe lability and scores on the clairvoyance tasks. It seemed like, in combination with geomagnetic fields, those people who had temporal lobe lability tended to do well in psi tasks, but other than that we didn't get very much.

You also looked at circadian rhythms. I was doing a dream ESP study and looking into the pineal gland and its possible production of DMT and sensitivity to geomagnetic fields. The pineal gland produces serotonin in the day, which gets converted into melatonin and pinoline and other chemicals at night in a highly circadian rhythm of activity. It's thought that serotonin made in the pineal could potentially be converted into DMT at night, which may regulate dreaming REM sleep. We woke people up around 3:00 a.m., the peak melatonin production period, to give them a dream precognition task. When they woke up at 8 a.m. they had to do a second task and we got an effect. People did better on the precognition task at 3:00 a.m. In various meditation traditions, 3:00 to 4:00 AM is thought to be the golden hour for meditation. People have a lot of anomalous experiences at that time of night; we don't know if that's because of melatonin levels or circadian rhythms and how they relate to psi performance.

I was trained in Chico, California, with the Berkeley Psychic Institute techniques where they teach clairvoyant and healing techniques and the founders were very keen on the pineal gland, so we always did the work from the sixth chakra near the pineal. In the yogi traditions the sixth chakra, the *ajna* chakra, is the etheric counterpoint to the pineal gland. Serena was probably one of the first people to hypothesize that DMT could be produced

in the pineal gland internally and possibly explain the importance of the pineal gland as a psychic center.

You did your dissertation on luck, what was that about? I had a lot of lucky experiences myself and explored the psi-mediated instrumental response theory, whereby unconscious psychological processes modulate your reception of psi information. It's seen as a subtle unconscious process that might change your behavior in very subtle ways so that you have fortuitous outcomes. In that sense, psi information might look like luck.

How do you measure that? I developed some scales to understand different beliefs about luck. I gave people a precognition task with an intrinsic reward in the task. If they did badly there were punished in a way by having to do a boring cognitive psychology task, but if they got more right than chance on the precognition task they were rewarded with erotic images. The better they did at the unconscious precognition task the more erotic the images got, so those people who like looking at erotic images tended to do much better on this task.

What about gender differences? Men tended to want to look at images of women and so did women, interestingly. They were less interested in looking at images of a naked man. There shouldn't be any relationship to their preferences because it's an unconscious precognition task. The results are coming from the future so it should have been impossible according to our current scientific understanding, but I and other researchers have continued to replicate those findings over six or seven studies. It's highly significant with a hit rate of about 28% or 29% over thousands of trials, compared to a chance hit rate of 25%.

Does luck tie with synchronicity? I think synchronicity and luck overlap quite a lot. Synchronicity could just be another name for a lucky event. Some people, like gamblers, think luck is something you can engender and has a personality. *Is that why gamblers have rituals like where they wear their lucky socks so they can affect luck?* Yes. *Maybe a lot of religious rituals are like that too*? If they have a particular aim; healing is essentially interactive magic, which involves a ritual practice with a specific intention.

What is your next book? I co-run a conference called "Breaking Convention" about psychedelic research and consciousness. In 2019 I invited five or six indigenous shamans from different parts of the world and was thinking of putting that together as a book. Recent books are a

collection of essays co-edited on women and altered states and psychedelics, called *Psychedelic Mysteries of the Feminine. In 19th century America, many women founded religions: They could do it because they believed, "I'm just a vessel for the divine, it's not me," like the women who founded Christian Science, Theosophy, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Shakers. More recently women channel entities such as Seth and Abraham.* There's a Zar female cult in Sudan, Egypt, and North Africa. Disempowered women in an Islamic culture find voice through this cult where they negotiate with demons. The men are usually quite scared by cult members so they become empowered through this ritual practice.

The other book is a collection of essays from our psychedelic conference. A future book will be a personal journey from disbelief through nihilism into agnosticism through my journey from studying psychology over the last 30 years. Each chapter will be a journey into some extraordinary phenomena and increasing degrees of doubts about the nature of reality or opening up to the extraordinary nature of reality.

Are you an optimist or a pessimist about our future? In some sense, the world is probably a better place, with apparently less war, but I think we are at a critical juncture. Rampant consumerism, capitalism, and the perpetual notion of development on a planet with limited resources have led to an era of awful ecocide. We face not just climate change but ocean acidification and species extinction, which for me is the most awful thing. We might be able to turn around climate change but once the species is dead there's no bringing it back. We're in the biggest wave of mass extinction in 140 million years—the sixth mass extinction. It's happening faster than previous extinctions and it's almost certainly mostly man-made.

I am hopeful about organizations like Extinction Rebellion that started in the UK in 2018 and is probably one of the fastest-growing nonviolent direct-action activism groups ever. They've got about a hundred-thousand people now who are interested in them. They give me a bit of hope that we can respond to the potential ecological systemic collapse that we're on the brink of—hope comes through action, not just sitting around being hopeful.

I think my research plays a part in that altered states and mystical experiences are about increasing connection. Psychedelics work by increasing connectivity both neurobiologically between different regions of the brain, and psychologically they connect your shadow to the other parts

of yourself. They connect with other people due to the increased empathy and they also help you connect with nature. My research shows that people who have taken psychedelics and those that have psychic experiences increase their eco-consciousness. They take up gardening and may become vegetarian and so on. I have hope that through researching our states of mind and through parapsychology that we begin to understand ourselves better and increase our connection to other humans and every species on this planet.

What do you do for fun in the face of all this deep thought and productive work? I hang out with my family, play with my daughter. My work is fun most of the time, thanks to the great people I work with. As long as I'm not sitting in front of the computer doing too much administration, it's generally fun. I give a lot of public lectures and I love teaching.

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Henry Reed, Ph.D.

The Validity of the Intuitive Imagination

Photo by Janis Reed

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What new methodologies has Dr. Reed developed to analyze and utilize dreams? What was the reaction of his Princeton faculty colleagues and the Jungian lab director?

How does Dr. Reed explain and utilize intuition? What else besides remembering dreams can develop our consciousness?

What exercises does he use in workshops to get participants in touch with their intuition?

I was born on January 14, 1944, in Miami, Florida. *You're a Capricorn. Do you identify with being a mountain goat?* Yes, indeed! The first dream I remembered as an adult seeking dreams featured an old wise man who had flying goats. I embraced the symbol to reflect an ideal of high flying intuition combined with down to earth, practical application. I created Flying Goat Ranch in the Blueridge Mountains of Virginia so I could experience actual goats and live among them. I fenced the place and created goat habitats. It is very steep property and I have many videos of the goats' antics, including gymnastics—like "flying" from one boulder to the next. As a Capricorn, I feel myself yoked to making progress in life in some special way.

My college fraternity brother, the visionary artist and MacArthur Foundation "Genius" awardee James Turrell, introduced me to the power of dreams to open new vistas of exploration. With the aid of dreams and then other altered states of consciousness, I intuitively sensed mountains worth climbing, sniffed out where I might begin, and then made decisions along the improvised path. As a flying goat, I want to bring the highest form of intuition down to earth and have it be practical to share with others.

My rising sign is Scorpio, and I've come to accept that I dawn on people as somewhat intimidating, even though actually I might feel shy and insecure inside, wishing to be understood and accepted. Consulting astrologers about the cycles and periods of various life aspects has been important to me from time to time. I always consult with more than one to compare impressions. One of my graduate students did her thesis by having 20 astrologers compute and interpret the same person's birth data, to do a comparison. I happened to be the subject although they didn't know that fact. The characteristic that they had the most agreement upon was the

person's vocation—a metaphysical teacher and author. The word that was most used by everybody was "intense."

What's your Myers Briggs Type Indicator? INFP or INFJ depending on my mood or how honest I'm being with myself. Generally speaking, I think of the four "functions" as equivalent to the "four directions" in earthly existence. We each begin our journey at some point on the circle and through life's experiences, we travel to the other points until we have come full circle and have relations with all four directions, even though we may favor one. Becoming "whole" rather than "perfect" is the true nature of the quest. I can remember the time I became enlightened about the essential difference between thinking and feeling. It occurred in a relationship where I realized I was speaking from a thought point of view while my girlfriend was speaking from a feeling point of view. That was a big wakeup for me—as big as any psychedelic experience—to realize feelings exist on their own as a unique reality. You can understand why something is good for you and hate it nevertheless! They are two different realities.

My parents met at a USO dance in Salem, Oregon, and got married in 1943 during World War II. While my dad was stationed in Europe, my pregnant mother was living with his parents in Miami. During my time in the womb, my mom was very worried about the future. When I was born, she took me back to her parents in Oregon. I grew up in Oregon, where my dad became a school teacher, and when I was in fifth grade, our family made the exciting move to San Diego, California, in 1956, which provided me a totally different life.

I remained in Southern California until I graduated with a Ph.D. from U.C.L.A. in 1970. I didn't want to leave California but I could not get a university job there, because Reagan was the governor and all the faculty positions were closed down. I could choose between a job in Princeton and one at New York University. So that's how I got flung out of the West Coast and was drafted to serve in the East Coast as an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Princeton. This renowned university proved to be a more traditional and conservative environment than I was used to, which felt very alien for me. In contrast, growing up in Southern California in the '50s and '60s had been in itself a visionary experience.

It wasn't until later in life that I realized how much my father had affected me. I needed little encouragement as a school student, but he did subtly encourage me to engage in art activity by giving me art supplies. He

once bought me a book when I was in high school, titled *Taboo Topics in Psychology,* which introduced me to parapsychology and ESP. He was a student of General Semantics and in his discussions of daily dramas, he often would announce its slogan, "the map is not the territory!"

Another way he influenced me was with his discussions at the dinner table about his inspired but frustrating work as the assistant superintendent of schools for San Diego County. He proposed a radical view that students should be provided with the opportunity to evaluate their teachers, which was certainly the opposite of custom. His proposal was unpopular. I didn't learn until I had been in hot water at Princeton that he got pushed into early retirement because of hostility toward his visionary ideas. I turned out to be my father's son. Today, student evaluation of college teachers, if not public school teachers, is a commonplace practice.

When I was given the opportunity to teach a course of my own creation at Princeton, I didn't think it visionary to consider the students first. I was surprised by the ironic paradox I encountered. Experimental psychology was well known back then for using deception as a key ingredient in the design of their experiments. By deceiving the experimental subjects as to the true purpose of the experiment, it was assumed their experimental observations would be "objective," and not tainted by the subjects' opinions on the subject matter.

Psychology, in general, was getting a bad reputation, both scholarly and among students, for the negative impact upon the students of being tricked in such experiments. Princeton protected its students from such abuse by having a rule that professors could not require students to be in an experiment as part of a course requirement. In contrast, I was coming from an emerging non-deterministic, non-mechanical view of research to an informational one. I was influenced by Martin Buber ("I and Thou") as to the spiritual significance of communication. I found practical inspiration from the humanistic psychologist Sydney Jourard (author of *The Transparent Self*) who proposed that we dialogue with those we wish to understand via our developing psychology.

My proposed course was on exploring the experience of taking a humanistic approach to the question of dream recall—can we improve our memory for dreams? The question had never been asked before in the research literature. At the time, there were countless published articles on various approaches to observing or stimulating dream recall among naïve

experimental subjects. There was no published study that encouraged people to develop their memory for dreams to see what might happen. My proposed course invited a group of students to work together with me to observe the process of learning to remember dreams. We were to explore how this "humanistic" method might yield information different than the usual approach.

The students flocked to this course, which was well underway when the faculty chairman found out that students were being "required" to be in an "experiment." I said that this class was an experiment in how you could do humanistic psychology. They said, "You're breaking the rules!" When I explained the situation to the students, they wanted to take the class and didn't care. The rules were meant to protect the students from manipulative experiments but I was opening up to the students with a new possibility for how to do research. We were all researching and learning together about what might be involved in developing dream recall.

The students and I composed and published a paper in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* about our work. To this day I will receive requests for a copy of the "Tally Sheet" that the students invented to "measure" their dream recall. One of the students in that class, Gayle Delaney, went on to become the Founding President of the International Association for the Study of Dreams. I think the class served the students well, although I had the department severely frowning at me.

You spent a sabbatical semester at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. How did that experience influence you? One of the problems of being a visionary is that you're ahead of your time and people don't understand you. Perhaps more significantly, it is hard to find guidance from experienced elders. I initially found inspiration in the Jungian approach, but later experienced why Jung preferred to be himself and not a "Jungian." I went to the dream laboratory in Zurich associated with the Jung Institute. I served as a research consultant to the lab, to design new experiments.

The director of the lab was Carl Meir, M.D. He'd written the book on the original dream experiment, *Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy*. It concerns the god Asklepios and his dream incubation temples, such as at Epidaurus, where people received healings in dreams. By the time of Hippocrates, Asklepios was already the mythical source of medical knowledge.

When I got to Dr. Meir's laboratory, however, I discovered he was taking a very mechanical approach to his dream research. Testing Jung's theory of the compensatory function of dreaming, he had people sleep in cold rooms to see if their dreams would show more physical activity as a compensation. I suggested to Dr. Meier that we might explore experimental methods of creative dream incubation, as inspired by the Asklepian mystery. His reply was (and I'll always remember it because we were each smoking one of his genuine Cuban cigars), "I don't want to play God!" It was as if he assumed his role itself would be to play Asklepios. The concern for what Jungians call "inflation" seemed to create its own block for him.

When I returned from my sabbatical, I designed my own dream incubation experiment as a spiritual ritual in art therapy. *How do you define "spiritual"?* Somewhat like the opposite of "selfish," it means motivated by a center of gravity beyond the individual, a motivation that is more comprehensive than my perspective and is attuned to a set of positive values such as love, harmony, etc.

I spent a couple of summers at a camp run by Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.), an organization that promoted dream study as a stimulant to spiritual awareness. There I was welcomed to try my ideas about the Asklepian dream incubation with the kids. I set up a tent in a reverential fashion to make a spiritual kind of a place for the dreamer. I told the kids they had to say a prayer to see if it was right for them to sleep in the tent. Based upon their report to me of subsequent dreams, I would make the determination as to who was ready to profit from the tent opportunity.

An invited dreamer would spend a day in isolation within the tent, making drawings that represented their prayers for a dream. After discussing their artwork, I'd prepare them for sleep and dreaming by playing Helen Bonney's "Positive Affect" medley of classical music. I gave the pre-sleep suggestion that they were going to go away to a wonderful place and meet someone who would offer a wonderful experience that they would be able to use in their life.

Many positive dreams arose from this process, among both children and adults. We were surprised by one especially significant dream, unlike anything recorded in the scientific literature, but common in the Bible. One woman reported (quoted here from the published account):

I awoke to a strong wind which had blown away the tent. An old lady jumped out of the bushes and flew me up into the sky. She showed me these tablets and told me that these are all of my lives. I saw where I was in my current life now. And then suddenly I was back down on the ground, the tent was back, and I was awake again and realized that I had experienced a special vision.

This dream is an example of what Julian Jaynes—a colleague of mine during my time at Princeton—would have called a "bicameral dream," occurring, like a vision, at the site of the bed. This dream is significant in that the dreams in the Asklepian temples had that same visionary aspect. Its appearance with the "dream tent" gives my experiment a certain significant distinction.

I discussed my dream incubation research with my personal Jungian psychoanalyst, to see whether or not she would say I was being guilty of inflation, or overstepping my bounds as a facilitator of positive experiences. She gave me a clean bill of health in terms of the dreaded Jungian disease of "inflation" (playing God). However, she did warn me that since I was in new territory, I would not be able to find any Jungian analyst who could mentor me in this research.

From time to time I would run into Stan Grof, M.D., an eminent consciousness researcher who was persistent in encouraging me to continue my "dream tent" research. I had two conflicts, however. One was that I felt personally inadequate to "supervise" experiences that were beyond my own. Secondly, I intuited that my mission related more to a community shared process than to me playing the role of shaman to an individual. When I lost my faculty position at Princeton, I felt I needed to learn how to bring my work out into the general population.

Why did Princeton dismiss you? Technically, as was stated in my early dismissal letter, it was my radical "unscientific" research. However, as confided to me by one of the senior faculty, I would have been allowed to serve out my six-year term had it not been for my undesirable behaviors (I was an active alcoholic from my freshman year at Pomona College to my second year teaching at Princeton) and poor relationships (no committee work). That was a big lesson for me—one of the hardest. Being visionary is

not too hard if you don't care if other people know about your work or respect it.

It's getting along with folks or having a chip on your shoulder that creates difficulties. In the official letter explaining my dismissal, it mentioned that my published writings showed that I had no intention of functioning as a scientist; that I involved prayer in the experimental procedures of the dream tent was the evidence. On the other hand, *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* accepted the article I wrote describing this research—not an easy journal to get published in.

How did you get to be Director of Research for Edgar Cayce's A.R.E.? I had a vision for how to conduct research as a spiritual activity and I was advocating an approach to science that was expressive of the organization's ideals. I also brought a practical idea for engaging the membership in an ambitious project (sounds like the flying goat?). When I went to Virginia Beach for the first time, around 1972, I slept at the ranch of Charles Thomas Cayce, Ph.D., who was working at his late grandfather's organization as a youth counselor. That very first night I had a special dream that has guided my research ever since:

> *We are gathered together for research into enlightenment but we don't know what to do. We are bumping into one another in the dark of the night and then suddenly we find ourselves dancing together in a circle. In the circle, we each have a round shield displaying symbols. Looking at the person's symbols enables you to recognize that person. As we do this special dance, a special pattern of sparks shoots up and lights up our space. We realize this is the way to do the research; this dance is our research path into enlightenment.*

At the time of the dream, I took it to imply that we could begin by encouraging the A.R.E. membership to attempt a project involving recording and using dreams and sharing the dream results with one another. My dream of the research dance served as a symbolic vision of the exciting possibilities involved in our collaborative research. Back then, dreams were generally thought of as a medical sample, like something that you'd take to a doctor for a private examination. Edgar Cayce was something like the Martin Luther of dreams, suggesting that dreamers had the ability and

authority to understand their own dreams and benefit from their guidance. That's a very different kind of a paradigm.

I created an experimental dream workbook for the members to use at home in our special project. The workbook, today published as *Dream Solutions*, outlined the procedures for a home-based adventure in dream incubation. It was a four-week adventure, a course of study, involving journal writing and daily experimentation to test out the ideas from the dreams. The instructions led the participant to develop a personal goal, or purpose, for dreaming, based on ideas from current dreams. Each week involved, first, using journal writing to develop a hypothesis about the implications of the dreams relative to the intended goal; and second, a plan for testing out this idea in the coming week.

The project went well. A good proportion of folks had stories to tell about how their dreamwork did indeed lead to inspiration and innovation along the lines of their chosen goal. There were many dreams reflecting the group's awareness that they were doing something together. There was more than one dream that highlighted a magazine devoted to dreams and dream sharing. Such dreams provided a seed for actually going "populist" with dreamwork (meaning not relying upon the participation and supervision of paid professionals) and starting a magazine to do exactly that. As someone later described it, we were "rescuing dreams from psychotherapy."

You were described as the "father of the modern dreamwork movement." Was that related to this project? In a sense, yes. The project created and motivated the idea of a magazine devoted to amateur dreamwork to help stimulate the culture. The name for it, *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal*, derived from two sources: I had a dream in which the "Sundance" term was associated with my work and then there was my own dream of the "research dance," which shared archetypal elements with the Native American collective visionary process.

Science is itself essentially a collective visionary process, based upon shared communication regarding experienced observations. I realized that if I displayed people's dreamwork the way they were accustomed to seeing explorers and researchers present their work in professional journals, the idea might catch on. The time was right and the journal was a great success in providing a rationale for, and many examples of how sharing dreamwork can help us all develop our dreamwork skills and the knowledge they bring.

During that time, I was exploring collective visionary dreamwork by capturing a serendipitous observation surrounding the Asklepian "dream tent" at the Edgar Cayce camp. Some kids would approach me and tell me a dream that I could recognize as responding to the private, undisclosed issue being explored and dreamed about by the other kid in seclusion at the dream tent. I wondered if such events might be cases of spontaneous ESP.

Robert Van de Castle, Ph.D., the psychologist who was successful as a dreamer in the famous Maimonides dream ESP experiments (described in the book Dream Telepathy: Experiments in Nocturnal Extrasensory Perception by Montague Ullman, M.D., and Stanley Krippner, Ph.D.) helped me to capture this spontaneous event and express it as a repeatable experiment. He named our experiment "The Dream Helper Ceremony" because of the different ways it helps us develop our relationships with each other and with dreams. It also has a ceremonial flavor that stimulates the participants' imagination and heartfelt involvement.

In our ceremony, or circle as we often call it today, we ask that two or more people who are experiencing a personal challenge volunteer to be the focus of the group's dreaming. We put their names into a hat, affirm our intention that the person whose challenge will bring out the most light in our group will be the person chosen, and then draw a name. We agree that we will record the dreams we remember that night and bring those notes when we meet again. The focus person sits facing away from the group, so the group remains blind to the person's responses to their dreamwork. Each person gives their dream report and folks make brief notes. Then the group looks for commonalities in the dreams.

In these dream circles, we observe common patterns in the dreams rather than sameness of content and that proves to be a significant feature of this kind of research. On the basis of these commonalities, the group forms a hypothesis concerning the focus person's still undisclosed personal challenge. For example, one dreamer reports a dream of watching television when the commercial comes on, gets up to get some coffee and is about to pour in some cream when she notices the cream has soured. She finds a fresh carton of cream, pours some, and returns to her TV show. Another dreamer reports a dream of driving to work, stopped at a traffic light. As the light turned green, and he starts to go, another car comes crashing through its red light but the dreamer manages to brake in time to prevent an accident.

There is quite a difference in the specific content of these two dreams, yet the drama in each is similar: Someone involved in a routine action notices unexpected danger in time to avoid an unfortunate event. It is the pattern in the drama of the stories that is our data, rather than the specifics in the dream. In this case, as it turned out, the focus person's normal automatic investment from their paycheck was going to "go sour," and attention needed to be paid to the problem. A dream helper circle produces a lot of dream material to share and process. In my book, *Dream Medicine*, I share several case studies in detail.

The very first time we did this circle it was with adolescents at the summer camp. I was in one circle dreaming for a young lady and Van de Castle was in the other circle dreaming for a young man. In my circle, there were many dreams of having trouble with water and difficulties with mothers—such as interrupting mom in her shower. In Van de Castle's circle, the common theme was the contrast between black and white, as in the printed page, checkerboards, etc. In our circle, the discussion of the dreams centered on the theme of relationships, especially with our mothers. In Van de Castle's circle, the discussion also was heavy on relationships, especially working on love in spite of differences.

As it turned out to our surprise, the two focus persons asked the same question, "Why did my lover and I break up?" Our focus person described how her mother did not approve of her boyfriend. In Van de Castle's circle, the focus person revealed that his girlfriend was an African American, but he doubted that could have been the reason for the breakup. We had the good fortune of meeting up with these two adolescents the following summer at camp. The young lady had gone into therapy with her mother and was working on developing a genuine independence. The young man reported to us that his ex-girlfriend confided in him that she was ashamed to admit earlier, but her African American friends had criticized her for dating a white guy, and she broke it off without explanation in order to please her friends.

Having more than one group happening at the same time makes for interesting comparisons that add meaning to what's going on while we sleep. A majority of the dream circles I conducted from the mid-'70s through the 2010s were in large audience formats, where I might have ten or more circles going simultaneously. I found these circles could conduct themselves given a sheet of instructions, coupled with a brief pep talk from

me. Afterwards, the focus persons would come forward and share a bit with the audience.

What role does ESP play in dreaming for another person? Getting his Ph.D. under Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., one of the authors of the dream ESP studies, Mark Thurston conducted a "mail-order" dream helper circle involving a hundred or more distant dreamers dreaming for one of two focus persons. They evaluated the results statistically by having the focus person attempt to discriminate between dreams intended for that person and a set of control dreams. He found positive results for one focus person, but not the other. Krippner's use of what parapsychologists call the "sorting" method gives us a familiar way to deal with the ESP question in the dream circle. It's ironic, however, that in all the years that I was involved conducting large audiences divided into several circles, I never heard a focus person use words like "ESP" or "telepathy" to describe what happened in their circle. Instead, they'd use words like "empathy, "or "feeling connected," or "we are one."

Here's something important, but often overlooked. When we added to the dream helper circle a final crucial step in the sharing process, we began to appreciate the deeper significance of what was happening. Although intended for the focus person's challenge, the dreams nevertheless reflected truths also about the dreamers themselves. It was as if the circle's task and objective stimulated a nocturnal experience somewhat like, "As I tune into you, what it brings up in me is… and how my dreaming self would have me deal with that is…." It reminds me of the old kindergarten adage, "It takes one to know one."

Through the projective act of dreaming for another, the dreamers also learn something about themselves. They discover in the focus person's dilemma a similar challenge within themselves to the growth in consciousness that human predicaments often inspire. That's why there's something more meaningful to folks who experience what happens in a dream helper circle than to identify it merely as telepathy. Instead, words like "empathy" and "compassion" come to mind. What starts out as a focus on a single individual and their personal concern becomes a self-help group therapy session on a topic of universal concern.

The dream circle is especially significant in that it allows laypeople with no experience to have a way of benefiting from the special guidance dreams provide. I'm reminded of Edgar Cayce's opinion that while topics

of ESP and parapsychology will attract folks, it is the experience of spirituality that will truly feed them in the long run. The circle has that potential. *Could you describe Edgar Cayce for people who don't know about him?* Cayce would prefer we not talk about him, but about what we have experienced ourselves of value that he pointed out to us. The book I wrote with Kevin Todeschi, *Contemporary Cayce*, outlines the modern philosophies, sciences, and findings that parallel the ideas in Cayce's work. He learned how to enter a self-hypnotic state of consciousness and began describing novel medical treatments, both for himself and others.

As a "medical clairvoyant" popular in that tradition during the turn of the century, Cayce's trance discourses proved accurate, especially in describing the role of the endocrine system in creating a relationship between mental health and physical health. His vision of reality while in an altered state of consciousness has many parallels to Jung's ideas and the "Integral Philosophy" movement, often associated with Ken Wilber and transpersonal psychology. These "new" perspectives generally reflect a return to the original idealism of Hermetic philosophy, attributed to the ancient Greek Hermes Trismegistus, who proposed seven principles of reality, such as asserting that the universe is primarily mental and is created through vibrations.

The main message for me of Cayce's work has been that there is wisdom within, but it depends upon the state of your consciousness. To tap into wisdom in a regular, useful manner, you must be committed to serving a higher value, usually the welfare of humanity, and there's a growth process involved. *Did Edgar Cayce recommend methods other than dreamwork to access this inner wisdom?* In my book, *Channeling Your Higher Self*, I describe the various modalities of creative, visionary functioning that comes from exploring altered states of consciousness in the spirit of Edgar Cayce's idealism. Jungian psychotherapy or analysis was crucial for me as a grounding, but practicing art, meditation, self-hypnosis, and teaching or public speaking, besides dreamwork, has been important in my creative development.

Practicing artwork is perhaps the least appreciated of the wisdom skills. I approach "channeling" as idealistically prepared improvisation for serving a higher cause. You allow the unconscious and the great unknown to express itself through your chosen modality to serve your chosen purpose. Here's how it happened for me with regard to using watercolor

painting as channeling exercise. As a younger person, I found that I really enjoyed making art if I could intend it as gifts for people. Since people appreciate receiving gifts, this practice provided me with an automatic reinforcement for my artistic labors. I had never attempted to produce art commercially, but mainly as an experience to enjoy and share.

Around the time I left Princeton, a girlfriend gave me a pocket watercolor set. I was homeless at the time, commuting in my VW Beatle between friends' homes. I didn't have much space to work, but I was very intrigued by that cute watercolor set. Most of my artwork had been with colored markers in my dream journals. Watercolors were "wishy-washy" and unpredictable compared to the deliberate effects from my markers—in other words, beyond the personal control I was used to having with my art tools.

As I dabbled with this new medium, I had a dream, "I am going into a theatre and I see a picture on the movie screen. My dad's voice is in my head, saying, 'Henry, you could paint like this.'" The picture was of a scene where the lines had been drawn first and then a color was added, like a coloring book. I started painting by drawing a design and then filling in with the color. I created some paintings that way and then had other dreams, each leading to a freer way to explore watercolors. I then adopted the mandala design—a circle dealing with the influence of more than one square—as my standard meditative context for quick, spontaneous painting as I became more comfortable with the medium.

This process took a huge leap forward when I got a computer with a screen I could paint on. Digital art was a fascinating medium and I found I could create abstract designs, like mandalas, very quickly and share them easily with friends. The medium inspired experimentation. I was growing my mailing list at the time and decided to "blog" mandala images rather than words to connect with my audience. From November 2004 to November 2011, I produced more than 2,550 spontaneous images that received many thanks and smiley faces in return.

Did Cayce recommend other practices for raising consciousness? Listening to music was good, but making music was even better. He suggested that everyone could learn to enjoy singing in the shower. It's not the performance but the experience. He once proposed that of all the things we could do physically to our bodies to "raise" our consciousness, our most powerful tool was our own voice. Besides experimenting privately with my

voice, I've enjoyed my opportunities to explore this voice effect in large groups. We begin with a pretend group hypnosis age-regression session, making racket together like a bunch of kids. We gradually move along to exchanging animal sounds, then inventing soulful and spiritual sounds, matching and contrasting our sounds with the others, until we are involved in a spontaneous jazz voice ensemble.

Such an improvised ensemble has a way of ending spontaneously, and when it ends, we immediately switch to spontaneous writing (Cayce called it "inspirational writing") for a few minutes. Finally, some read aloud their writing to the group. Invariably there is a great sense that by the sharing of our voices the way we did, we were "transported" to another place and have the written record to prove it. This kind of research is an approach inspired by Cayce's stories of a past "Temple Beautiful," where the arts were used to create enlightenment and the transformation of consciousness. It's one of my favorite "channels."

Probably it's the area of self-hypnosis, where I was following Cayce's example, that most folks would be interested in how I explored "visionary skills." Henry Bolduc, an Edgar Cayce enthusiast who wrote the book, *Self-Hypnosis: Creating Your Own Destiny*, approached hypnosis the way Cayce approached dreams by encouraging people to be their own creative consultant. He gave me several private sessions where I learned how to enter an altered state of consciousness and then function creatively within that frame of mind.

On a practical level, during one of these hypnosis sessions, I described a series of steps I could take to free myself from smoking tobacco. Having failed many times at attempts to quit smoking, I found this personally tailored approach very satisfying. It began by asking me to delay by a few minutes my first cigarette of the day by going outside to explore the weather and to do the same before my after-dinner cigarette. That was the beginning of a process of breaking what seemed like a fixed link in an unbreakable chain. It also gave me confidence in the validity of the "channel" opened by self-hypnosis, provided I had a worthy cause.

What do you think hypnosis is tapping into? I call it "the intuitive heart." That's because, in your heart, you know what's true! The term came to me in an actual vision I had of Rolling Thunder, the famous Native American medicine man. At a time of despondency, I was totally surprised when he appeared out of nowhere and socked me in the chest. As he did so,

he announced, "You should be feeling grateful." He disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared, but the shock in my chest remained real. [*Barbara Stone* had a similar experience.*] When I got home, I painted a picture of the feeling/idea I had in my chest. In my book, *The Intuitive Heart,* I document many of the common quotations that suggest we think of intuition as something we know in our hearts. A definition of mythology, for example, is that it is something that didn't really happen that way, but in your heart you know it is nevertheless true.

That phrase, "our hearts go out to…" is a metaphor for the intuitive experience of empathy. It seems significant that we can assume that for most folks, the reality referred to in that phrase is apparent; an automatic, natural expression of intuitive understanding is being shared in a "oneness" experienced in the community's intuitive, imaginative response to the public drama. I've found that this spontaneous response can easily be elicited and it becomes a teacher introducing us to our natural intuition.

You've worked with thousands of people in your workshops; how do you help them develop their intuition and evoke the imagination and the heart? Ever since that class at Princeton, workshops have been my laboratory, people attending have been my co-investigators. Below I provide a list of peer-reviewed, published articles that reported on my experiments and observations from workshops—the same reprints I mailed out to my workshop participants describing their contributions, to complete the feedback loop in our research dance and stimulate further explorations.

Are you creating a new research methodology? I've certainly explored a novel way of funding the research. The people who care about this subject matter come to my workshops and process the experiments with me. The "data" is not abstract statistics, but stories and experiences that they experience, and which occur under specific, repeatable conditions. The experiences have personal meaning as well as value as indicators of intuitive functioning. I've also had to counter the so-call scientific argument against intuition. The typical approach is a set-up to doubt the reality of intuitive functioning as intuition is defined negatively: knowing WITHOUT information processing, or knowing WITH NO basis for knowing. How can you prove that there was NO, NOTHING involved in the arrival of the "knowing," so how can we affirm intuition?

I take a different approach, one that is not based on equating intuition with essential psychic ESP. Instead, I define intuition as knowing from

within as contrasted with "knowing from having been informed." It is also more about heart than ESP, yet non-local perception combined with "exceptional wisdom" is involved. The heart metaphor seems to integrate all that (not to mention that Dean Radin has evidence that the physical heart can demonstrate ESP in the laboratory by showing that it physically responds to the emotionality in pictures before the picture is revealed). [*Radin explained, "He's probably referring to a study by Rollin McCraty,* which was a replication of the presentiment studies that I initiated."*[33]]

If you're in a workshop, how do you help people get in touch with their imagination and their heart? Describing how I introduce folks to the "intuitive heart" approach to intuitive functioning is also a good way to share a bit about any "new science" that might evolve methodologically from my explorations. Imagine being in an audience of 200 strangers. I ask them if there's anyone present who can remember feeling regret over not following a hunch. Almost all the hands fly up amongst a bit of laughter. It's a great place to start, because it puts us all on the same page, and eager to learn and explore.

I ask folks to turn their attention to their breathing. After a minute or so, I ask, "When you turned your attention to your breathing, did you find yourself assuming control or influence over the breath, as in taking a deep breath?" Most hands go up. I ask, "Why did you immediately turn observing into controlling? Don't you trust the way your breath naturally functions? Could we be dealing with an example of getting in your own way and blocking your own natural intelligence? What if we were to explore learning from our natural breathing?" I ask the audience to once again shift their attention to their breathing, with the intention of relaxing and observing the spontaneous breath. The next step is to empathize with the natural breathing, to feel the relaxation and letting go of the exhalation. Experience the spontaneous incoming of the inspiration. Practice experiencing trusting the inspiration—what does it feel like to totally let go as the air flows out and then be re-taken by the incoming inspiration?

The next step is that I ask them to become a visionary. I ask them, "While you're experiencing your breath, what does it remind you of? Let memories, images, stories come to mind that suggest how you are experiencing the qualities of spontaneous, natural breathing." I encourage the sharing of these experiences because of an important, surprising discovery: Although they perceive different images, they can easily

empathize with the images that others receive—a special kind of confirmation or agreement. One person, for example, reports that it's kind of like seeing the waves coming in and out of the ocean. Somebody else says it feels like a balloon fills up and then empties. Here folks have taken a physical sensation and created a visual metaphor from the imagination. By comparing our impressions, and finding meaning in them, people start building confidence in the imagery that comes to them spontaneously—that it likely describes something that they are experiencing that makes sense.

The information does come to us in our own personal language, which is built up by our experiences—knowing from within. It is an intuitive process, matching up the current experience with something from the past. I call intuition as knowing from within through a process of recognition, of being reminded of how the patterns connect. If I ask the group if they can empathize with the other people's imagery, there is an enthusiastic affirmation. People get different images for the experience of spontaneous breathing, yet they can empathize with one another's imagery. It's like scientists agreeing on the measurements in their observations. But here, the agreement is not through physical measurement but through imagined experience and empathy.

How do you know it's not only imagination? For one thing, as Jung and his followers have observed, our spontaneous imagery is very good at understanding our inner condition. One of my favorite examples is, after going through the experience of relaxing into the natural breathing, one woman noted that she found herself remembering the experience of tucking in her daughter at bedtime. I asked her, "What is it that we do when we tuck our kid into bed?" She said it was reassuring. I noted that what kids often wonder about is where they will go when they fall asleep and will they return home by morning. A good tuck-in is reassuring.

Why would this memory come to her? She needed reassurance that after dissolving into her breath she would still be able to return. The story suggests that there is some sense of ego dissolution involved in that part of the process, something that requires some self-reassurance. I call it learning to be "trusting," as in trusting the flow of our experience to bring us the needed information.

How does the heart come into play? From experiencing gratitude. A second stage in this process is to give thanks for the natural breathing. The goal is to enter a state of gratitude. The feeling of gratitude is easily located

in the heart area. When I ask participants to compare their experiences of how the heart feels, we get a variety of images. Yet once again, although the imagery varies, folks agree that they can empathize with one another's imagery. What is significant is that in the state of gratitude, there is neither hope nor fear, but an embrace of what is. It's a frame of mind with no biases to distort the intuition. The assumption here is that the love of truth brings forth the truth. We go from letting go and trusting to becoming, in the attitude of gratitude, trustworthy.

To go further into the question of the validity of the imagination's spontaneous responses, I have researched extensively what it is like for us to interpret the feelings of "vibrations." I found that the intuitive imagination seems to be able to "read" vibrations by interpreting subtle feelings as imagery and fantasies. Our language contains examples of such visionary renderings, as in "The emotional atmosphere in the room was so thick you could almost cut it with a knife!" *Are you saying that vibrations are an intuitive experience?* They are real, they are felt, and are interpreted via intuition.

Here's how I've explored the intuitive imagination and the experience of "vibes" between people. I'll ask folks to sit in pairs facing each other. I ask one to pretend to be looking in a mirror, making funny faces, while the other person pretends to be the mirror image and imitates the first person's expression. As they proceed, there is plenty of laughter. I'll have them switch roles back and forth for a couple of minutes. After this brief bonding exercise, I'll ask them to close their eyes, put their hands in their lap, make a heart connection with their partner, and let their imagination flow freely while assuming it is responding to their connection with their partner. After about three minutes, I call them out of this meditation and ask them to share with each other what they experienced.

To describe what folks do experience, how they interpret their experiences, and the implications for unconscious or intuitive communication required that my peer-reviewed paper be broken into two parts for publication. Quite a lot happened during those three minutes of silence. Over a period of an hour or two, a group of folks will move from total skepticism to heartfelt enthusiasm for the meaningfulness of the exercise.

What happens is that the partners discover that they shared some common elements in their silent fantasies. Sometimes they surprised each

other by reporting imagery that matched objective aspects of the other person's life. In more advanced exercises, one person would dwell upon an undisclosed personal challenge while the partner would simply make the heart connection and allow the imagination to flow. How do you respond to someone's vibrations? We bring our own set of experiences to the task of pattern recognition: What have I experienced that feels the same way as I do when connecting with this person?

The concept of "vibration" is confusing. It suggests something physical, yet we find it has mental, or meaningful, connotations. Yet, vibration means the oscillation of opposites. One vibration metaphor that I found is truly significant and real enough for people to experience is the love vibration. When I think about it, going back and forth between the two complementary polar opposite experiences, "I am you; I am not you," it suggests a pathway through and beyond the paradox of our oneness. When we look at each other with our senses, we suffer and differ as we do when we talk with our words and use all these categories. In silence, people enjoy each other with the heart and can feel great empathy for one another. What we find in intuitive communication is it's more than human contact. Why is it that we find the defensive isolation more real than the underlying intuitive connection?

The work I've been focused on started with the question: Why is psychic ability scary? When I was thinking about this person and then he showed up, that's spooky—why? I spent a lot of time looking at this question. It seems that the issue is about losing boundaries. Looking back in history, it seems to have begun first with pollution, with Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring*. Here we begin to realize that pollution does not respect political boundaries. Decades later we find that there are countless boundaries that have disappeared or become meaningless. AIDS broke biological boundaries, electronic digitalization broke information boundaries. Gender boundaries are fluid now and very disturbing to some people. Globalization has increased our interdependency and experiments have shown that as folks become more interdependent, they experience more telepathy types of events between them. Today we have countless folks who are "empaths" and struggle to find their true selves in the sea of everyone's feelings.

What we've learned from the dream circles, and some of these other experiments, is: What are you going to experience about other people when

you try to help them? You'll experience issues that relate to you. That's an old Jungian principle—our most sensitive intuitive mirror about ourselves is our perceptions of other people. How can we employ this phenomenon to good effect? Our world is coming to a big divide. Some people are enraptured by increasing discoveries of an underlying unity of love, while others are scared by all the changes in the status quo. The difference could be a fork in the road regarding how folks respond to a global consciousness event that transcends any sense of boundaries. The people focusing on the love revealed will embrace the mystical revelation of our oneness in consciousness as the awaited "Heaven on Earth." The folks focusing on the loss of a controlled sense of self may experience sufficient anguish to impact their physical survival.

I've explored alternative art forms for groups of people to share together that might enable us to "ride" the energy of such a singularity of oneness consciousness. Besides spontaneous jazz chanting, I've tried group dreaming to produce content for a spontaneous community psychodrama involving some surprising moments of unified consciousness. One of the circle dances I developed on the basis of my dream of the research dance goes something like this: People form one large circle, comprised of every other person going one direction, the others, the opposite. The dance proceeds as the people in the two interwoven circles move forward, greet the next person, making eye contact to share in the awareness of a heart connection and then moving on to the next encounter. Around and around we go, chanting these words (there's a recording of it on my website, henryreed.com): "I know that you know that I love you…. What you know is that I know you love me too! I know that you know I am you…. What you know is that you're me too."

Are you optimistic or pessimistic about our future in the face of climate change, etc.? I'm pessimistic that the status quo will survive as is, but I'm optimistic that the changes will stimulate a transformation in human life that will bring in the next state of our evolution.

What do you do for fun besides art and dreaming? For fun, I ride my horse, Sparkles, up in the mountains, where Virginia has miles of trails. I also drive a horse cart around my neighborhood of Fox, Virginia, alongside the New River. I go on walks with my donkey, Precious, down our road along Fox Creek.

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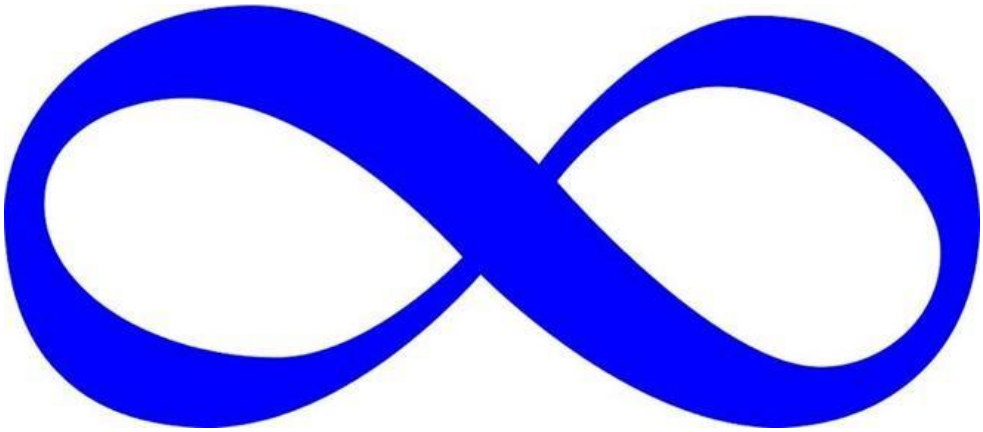
Section Two

Near-Death Experiences and Mysticism



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Experiencing Other Levels in Dreams and NDEs

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What are examples of intention changing brain activity?

How is consciousness different from brain function?

What evidence does Dr. Fenwick present that consciousness continues after death of the body?

What is the significance of dreams?

I was born in Kenya in 1935 at 2:00 a.m. on the 25th of May. *Do you identify with being a Gemini?* I absolutely do because I have multiple interests and I love them all. I decided to do medicine; apparently, a lot of Geminis like doing medicine and I don't know why. *A Gemini characteristic is to be really curious and I think to be a good medical professional you need to be curious.* Oh yes, open to new ideas.

What was your family doing in Kenya? It was a colony then. My father was a younger son when the practice was to send younger sons out into the colonies. He went out there and farmed coffee. It was a great life. *How did your parents meet if your mother was studying in Scotland and he was in Kenya?* My father went home to see his family and they met onboard ship when he was returning to Kenya. My mother was on her way back from Edinburgh to Melbourne, so in Mombasa they said goodbye and she sailed on. But he caught the next boat to Melbourne and brought her back to Kenya. In those days you couldn't bring a lone girl into Kenya without marrying her, so he married her in Mombasa.

Do you think that it changed your worldview to be raised in such a different country? Absolutely. Blue sky children like open air and wide-open spaces, not like those who are brought up in London. *I would think being a minority you have compassion for people who are different.* In a sense, that's true. But my mother was a surgeon and during WWII she ran a hospital on her own where she had to teach the staff and the anesthetists and everyone. There was a compassionate feel within the family that rubbed off on me.

I was the third and last sibling in my family, which means I was the freest of the lot and didn't feel I had to stick in any particular groove. I'm more of an extrovert than an introvert and I've got quite an intuition. I'm analytical about new ideas, but I am much more interested in opening up a new area and letting other people do the detailed work on it. *That's Gemini too. The words for the last category of the Myers Briggs are not descriptive—judging or perceiving. Judging people like order and like to check things off their lists. P people like open options.* I'm halfway between those because there are some things where you have to be structured and there are some things where you can be free.

When you were growing up, what was your family's attitude toward religion and spirituality? Were they Church of England? Yes, I was brought up in the Church of England. My mother was more spiritual than my father

was. We went to church occasionally, but for me, the real opening to spirituality was when I was about 20 and read a book *The Outsiders* by Colin Wilson. It's about mystics, poets, and artists who were enormously talented and creative because they could contact a different aspect of consciousness. The idea that a higher level of consciousness exists, which people could access, was very influential to me.

Have you experienced regional influences since you've taught in Japan and England? Do you find that you teach differently in Japan? I've done it and I certainly find it's different; I love teaching there because they are so conscientious. That's certainly true. I like Japan very much but they are very rule-bound. As they say, if you behave as a nail and stick out, they hammer you down. That is not really my personality. For example, the limitation of freedom in that if I say to people inside the lab, "Would you like to come to lunch?" When there's a group consensus, then we'd all go to lunch. But most of the time I found they were enormously helpful and supportive.

What led you to become a neuropsychiatrist? My mother was the first woman surgeon from Melbourne in Australia to go to Edinburgh in Scotland to get a higher degree. I wanted to be a doctor like her and I was also fascinated by the brain. Even as a child I wanted to know more about it, so I thought I'd be a neurosurgeon. At Cambridge, I was influenced by Lord Adrian and Andrew Huxley, who both got the Nobel Prize for physiology.

When I was doing my internship to a neurosurgeon in the early 1960s, there weren't any ways of investigating the brain. CT scans and MRIs hadn't come into use. You just injected air into the spinal column and then x-rayed the brain to see where the air was and the brain wasn't. I felt it wasn't my field because you're looking down a dark hole all the time. I was very lucky because one of my mentors was leading in British EEG research but I found electrophysiology doesn't tell you much about mind, so I became a psychiatrist, which led me to neuropsychiatry.

It's sad to me that psychiatry evolved from Freud and Jung, where you would discuss your dreams and understand your unconscious propulsions, to prescriptions. In the U.S., the insurance companies don't want doctors to spend much time with a patient and they want them to prescribe. It's the same in England, but when I was growing up, there weren't the drugs that there are now. Prescriptions weren't the be-all and end-all of everything.

Talking to your patients and understanding them was enormously important.

I was a neuropsychiatrist specializing in neurological illnesses—especially epilepsy. It's a very good teacher of brain structure because you can see where the seizures are going and through what structures. *That tells you what part of the brain influences what part of the thinking process?* Absolutely, and it mimics a lot of psychiatric conditions too, like you can get postictal psychosis after a seizure. *Is there any pushback among psychiatrists against this emphasis on prescribing drugs or is it now the new norm?* There is a lot of drug prescribing and you'd have to really specialize more in psychotherapy to come away from that. There are newer drugs that are good in some ways but would I just prescribe drugs? No, because I like talking to people.

There's a real concern in the US about the growing number of teenagers, especially girls, who are anxious and depressed. Some people attribute it partly to social media pressure and feeling inadequate. Does the UK have the same problem? Yes, I think that probably when you get any kind of population, especially adolescents who are open to the criticism of their peers on a daily basis, then you will get that effect.

What do you think allows boys not to be as reactive? Girls are very sensitive to what their best friend thinks, whereas boys don't seem to care so much. Remember on social media you are in your bedroom with your phone and if somebody posts a message to tell you they think you are the most revolting thing they've ever come across, it tends to hurt, especially if you're that age. *It's kind of a double-edged sword because boys are taught not to be emotionally reactive but that can inhibit their deep feeling as well.* I think a lot of this is cultural. The Japanese word for wife is *Kani,* which means "deep within," meaning a woman's place is deep within the home. You remember that the Japanese parliament didn't vote that women could have contraception until they permitted Viagra for men.

I see you worked at Broadmoor Hospital. It's a maximum-security hospital for violent mentally insane patients who had been sent there by the courts. I did the neurophysiology with a colleague, Professor George Fenton. It was very interesting and I became interested in the law about "automatism" [an action performed unconsciously or involuntarily] when a patient of mine pushed an old lady over during a fit. She was unfortunately

seriously injured. The court had to decide if he acted automatically and hence my interest. I have done many high profile cases since.

A lot of scientists I've interviewed said meditation helps them stay centered. Is that part of your practice? When the Maharishi came to London I joined a group and learned to meditate. So I had a ready-made supply of meditating subjects and was able to take some of them to the lab and put electrodes on them and we published some of the first papers on meditation. One of my first papers in 1969 was on changes in brain states in meditation. Maharishi said that the gateway to consciousness is between sleeping and waking and we did find that our subjects held themselves between sleeping and waking during the meditation session. Then, afterward, they tended to go back to sleep again. *Even in the lab, with the electrodes on their head, they could sleep?* Good heavens, yes. *Were you able to use yourself as a subject as well? Some people are talking about self-study as part of psi research.* Any displays of brain activity would have taken me out of the meditation.

A famous American physiologist called Joe Kamiya was enormously interested in feedback, particularly in biofeedback. We did two studies on biofeedback and increasing alpha activity and showed it worked. One of the most interesting studies was one on epilepsy. Since epileptic seizures take place in a functioning brain, there must be a relationship between brain function and seizures. Spikes in the EEGs indicate the abnormal activity which can lead to a seizure.

We asked patients to try either to increase spikes, decrease spikes, or do nothing and the results showed that they could learn to decrease spike activity. However, when I showed the results to my colleagues, they said, "You're only showing one half of it. Show them they can increase spikes as well." I asked one patient who had been able to decrease the spikes and found that she could indeed do this, but it was enormously threatening to her and she terminated the experiment, explaining, "I have a mechanism that I use all the time to control my seizures and by increasing the spikes I was taking that mechanism away." This proved to me that there was indeed a relationship between mind and the occurrence of seizures.

Was there a particular technique that worked like deep breathing or was it just setting the intent "I want the spike rate to lower"? We gave her a counter and every time a spike occurred, the counter notched up. She was asked to stop the counter notching with her intention. Interestingly, a lot of

my colleagues didn't like that because they said it would make my patients feel very guilty. However, I found the exact opposite; my patients were delighted if they found that they could gain some control over their seizures and learn to decrease them.

We'd better do some definitions. What are mind, brain, and consciousness? There is a lot of debate about that. There are two belief structures: One is that everything is brain and there is nothing else—it's all material. The whole of the perceived world is like a video created for us by the brain. That leads to a very uncaring society that can damage the world around us because it's only material. The other belief structure is that our consciousness is much wider than that and includes idealism, panpsychism (the belief that everything contains consciousness), and the belief that consciousness is everything. It seems to me to be a much better structure. I very much like Abraham Maslow's idea that the brain filters our view of reality, so when the filters change, reality changes.

The work I've done on NDEs and death itself indicates that consciousness is quite different from brain function. Iain McGilchrist is a neuropsychiatrist I worked with for some time. He published a famous book about the right and left hemispheres of the brain titled *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World.* At a recent conference, I was able to ask him what he thought consciousness was, just like you're asking me. His answer was this: Think of a stream that is the raw material of consciousness with a rock that creates ripples. The ripples reflect the structure of the rock but are not the rock in any sense, just the way the stream interacts with the rock. He uses this as a model for consciousness with the brain as the rock in the stream that structures consciousness.

Is mind synonymous with consciousness? This is difficult to discuss because at the moment we don't understand enough to say where the brain ends and where mind begins, or where mind ends and consciousness begins. The brain correlates are enormously powerful but when is a correlate causative? For example, after WWII in Germany, there was a baby boom, which you often see in countries after a war. During that period, the weather was much wetter, allowing the stork population to increase so there was a high correlation between baby births and the numbers of storks. It's a nice idea of the relationship between a correlation and a causation.

There seems to be a growing movement of scientists who are critical of the materialist paradigm and advocate a non-materialist paradigm. Where do you think we are historically in that push for a paradigm of consciousness in the scientific community? I think this is changing because there are now so many experiments which show that mind beyond the brain is an empirical fact. I haven't yet been in a discussion with somebody who says that that view is rubbish AND has read the literature. In fact, in one discussion, the person said, "Why should I bother to read the literature? It's all done badly." Of course, what is turning out now is that many of the parapsychologists are more accurate than some of the psychologists and get much better results, repeatable results.

Some people look at transpersonal psychology as an intermediate between psi and more traditional approaches. We don't have any option because it's there. Many people have very wide experiences, so yes, we study them. What's so thrilling now is that a lot of data is being gathered, particularly by Jeffrey Martin.[34] His research is helping us understand the very wide mental states of many of the religious leaders of the past. It seems as if sitting on a golden throne is not what it's about. It's about the hard work you do before that when you're in the forest, desert, or under the Bodhi tree. That's come now into science. Martin says that about 70% of people are capable of getting into this sort of state of consciousness which he calls the non-symbolic experience. That is very exciting because I think it's on the evolutionary ladder and things are changing.

I run into people in my practice who associate a premonition or insight as frightening or they fear that people will think that they are crazy. It seems there is still pressure in the West to label anything you can't explain with your physical senses as crazy. I think that, unfortunately, is true. One field in which I've done some work is the experiences of the dying. One of the most common death-bed experiences is a visit from a dead relative who may say that they have come to collect you. The doctor may simply say, "That's just the morphine talking, just ignore it." This ignores the fact that for the dying person the visit is an event which gives them enormous help, comfort, and loving-kindness. There is no doubt that these experiences are quite common, but the medical profession tends to ignore them because they don't fit a material frame.

Einstein viewed quantum mechanics as "spooky action from a distance" but shouldn't it open up the scientific community to the idea that

just because something seems to defy common sense, it doesn't mean it isn't real? Absolutely. Since quantum mechanics came in we know we're all connected to each other. Every particle in the universe connects to every other particle in the universe so how can we be separate? *Physicists don't like this, but it's tempting to say that since entangled particles influence each other at a distance, the mechanism that allows for that kind of connection could explain clairvoyance, healing at a distance—all kinds of psi phenomena.* I don't have the technical expertise to be able to support or not support it. It seems a nice story to me. I like it very much and since we are always interested in telling ourselves stories, a quantum story seems to me to be a good one.

Another implication of quantum physics for scientists is that the observer or measurement changes that which is being measured, so we can't say that there is objective reality. Do you think that science has come to grips with the observer effect? Perhaps at some levels it has. For example, a new study shows that 40 seconds of compassionate care for somebody alters their immune system and their rate of healing. The relationship between people reflects what you're talking about as well. The degree of our sensitivity to care and compassion from other people is enormous and the movement of the culture in that direction is really helpful.

Do you think with the expansion of AI you could have a robot that was dedicated to the bedside of the patient to say, "Oh, it sounds like you are feeling…" Or does compassion have to have a vibrational feeling to be heartfelt? I think it's a most interesting question. I think a *catbot* is something which will be in all our houses. You can make them very mechanical and teach them what to do, like purr for you. *They should have those in nursing homes. Catbots would purr and be soft and cuddly.*

Let's get more specific into your work with NDEs. You said your interest was sparked by Raymond Moody's book Life After Life *but you thought, "That's a California phenomenon," but then you realized it wasn't just California.* Yes*,* I realized this when a patient came into my consulting rooms and told me what had happened to him when a cardiac catheter operation went wrong. He lost consciousness, left his body, watched the people trying to resuscitate him, went down the tunnel, and had a full-blown NDE. This man told me so much about the nature of the experience that I had to believe what he was saying. I became interested in it and decided to study it.

Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' patients talked to her and she paid attention to them whereas other doctors didn't hear NDE accounts. So, it takes a special physician to respect the patients' experiences so they will talk about them. Yes, Pim van Lommel tells a lovely story about it. He is a Dutch cardiologist who studies NDEs and was giving a lecture saying how common they are. One of his physician colleagues stood up and said, "You say these things are common but in my experience, I haven't seen one." One of his patients stood up and said, "I've had one, but you're the last person I'd tell." There's a lot of that.

Now, NDEs are more common because of the ability to resuscitate people after heart attacks, so are you hearing that the medical profession is more open to considering NDEs? In our studies of 400 NDEs, only 10% were due to cardiac problems. The only reason we studied cardiac patients is because it's the only case when we can know what state the brain is in—there is no blood flowing through it. However, 90% of people with NDEs have them for different reasons, such as during illness, operations, childbirth, or intense fear. The idea that the brain has to be switched off for it to happen is not true. The variance of this phenomenon is very wide. For example, some people never go through a tunnel because they just float through space. *You found that in Japan they experience going through caves, not tunnels.* Yes, and crossing a river with a boat, but that's cultural. *You said crossing the river in the boat is common for hunters and gatherers. How in the world does one interview hunter-gatherers about NDEs?* Yes, there are cultural effects, but there are an awful lot which aren't, which are cross-cultural.

The being of light, being met by relatives and friends, the life review—what else is uniform? Don't think of them as uniform because they are and they aren't. In some of the most profound accounts that I've been given, people have been floating through empty space, moving toward the ultimate in love which is quite often related to light. These NDEs are structured intensely in feeling rather than form. They seem to have short-circuited, if you like, the lower level ones which are more structured so that they can describe more easily what happens to them. You can say to some, "Did you go down a tunnel?" Yes. "Being of light?" Yes. "Into an English country garden, not an American country garden?" and they go, "Yes." "Meet your relatives?" Yes. "They sent you home?" "No, I decided to come home." It varies.

I'm thinking of Robert Monroe's books and his teaching people to astral travel. He had very similar experiences of accessing love and different dimensions, illustrating your point that you don't have to have a dead brain to have transcendent experiences. Absolutely, they are all within the repertoire of human experience. Then, you always come back to your initial question: Is it brain function only or is consciousness something wider? *I like the image of the filter, as Bernardo Kastrup* discusses. Something like psychedelic drugs or some kind of assault to the brain cuts off our normal filtering devices enabling access to the broader world of consciousness. Do you think that works?* I think that works very nicely. *Have you had those kinds of transcendent experiences yourself?* Yes, I've had some transcendent experiences. You can't be in the field and not have them. Some of the most profound ones came after long periods of meditation or going on a retreat. *You experienced that deep sense of love and oneness?* Oh yes, your perceptual field is totally different.

I'm assuming that your wife Elizabeth, your co-author of books like The Truth and the Light, *shares your interest in this field?* Yes, she is a very lovely wife. She is very good at English too. She writes them and I dictate them. *May I ask how long you've been married?* Fifty-six years. *How do you keep from getting bored and taking each other for granted?* You couldn't be bored with that woman. She is astonishingly lively. *Some people say that you have to work at making a relationship work as by taking time talking through issues. Do you have any advice for people?* Yes, we're playful with each other. This is one of the secrets. If you're playful with the other person then it's always amusing and it's fun.

Did you have time to have children along the way? Yes, two girls and a boy. *Did they go into science fields?* They are really fascinating. The first one identified with me and has gone into psychology. The second one identified with my wife and has gone into writing children's books. The third one has got a little bit of both of us. Interestingly enough, he is working in Japan and he's got his own business there.

Let's summarize your books: In The Truth and the Light *(1996), you tapped into a resource when you did a TV show and 2,000 people wrote to you. That was a two-person job for sure.* It certainly was. We had to read 2,000 letters and reply to them. *What surprised me is that only 12% reported life reviews although they seem like such a pivotal point. What did I learn? Where did I fall short? seems so crucial.* You usually think the life

review is something that everybody has but they don't. What I've learned since then is that people may have had life reviews but haven't seen it as such. They came back from their experience with detailed information about the way their previous lives had affected them, probably within the life review. Again, I want to break the stereotype.

The only animals that appeared in those NDE's were dogs? I think that is enormously interesting. *Have you ever had cats that were part of the NDE?* Yes, but it's rare. *It's interesting that children have NDEs because they are not programmed. So when children have these psi experiences like Ian Stevenson's work on remembering past lives, it seems like we really need to pay attention.*

You mentioned the drug ketamine. How does that work to induce a blissful experience? It probably involves the NMDA receptor. Some people get very bad trips on ketamine. Other people get better trips, but one wouldn't be surprised about this difference because people respond differently to different drugs due to their physical and psychological makeup. Structures in the brain may predispose us to NDEs or the mystical experiences as a whole. I think the materialist hypothesis is less explanatory than the brain as a filter theory.

The way psychedelic drugs work is they reduce the filter? They don't particularly impact one part of the brain or another? There are accounts of people who have taken LSD weekly for a long period of time so they got to know the LSD experience extremely well. They have given a very accurate categorization of levels of consciousness which is very similar to some of the more esoteric descriptions in Eastern religions, so you have to argue that they had access to an experiential world that is common to all of us. I don't see that that's too fantastic at all.

In The Hidden Door *(1999) you focused on understanding and controlling dreams. Does that mean lucid dreaming?* Yes, I was going through an interesting phase to see how much I could control my dreams. It was brought about because I was told a story by a barrister who was very frightened. At night, in a dream, he would walk into a forest and then a clearing. The bushes on the other side of the clearing would wiggle to reveal a wild pig that was determined to get him. The dream would end with him running away but not doing it terribly effectively. I taught him to face it so in the height of his terror he just stood there. The result was interesting. He said, "The pig came towards me and I remembered what you

said in my dream. The pig then turned into a little suckling pig and went between my legs and disappeared," so he got dream control.

Have you experienced prophetic dreams? I haven't had a prophetic dream myself but we've got accounts from people with prophetic dreams, some of them easily explicable. One of them was about a man who was riding a horse and came out of a forest to see tigers who were out to kill him. He turned around to see the tigers gaining on him. When he turned around there were men in white coats shooing the tigers away but one of the tigers was malignant and caught him in the back with its claw. He then woke up with them being chased away. He got his wife to check his back and there was the beginning of a lesion there. When he went to his GP it was a melanoma that was removed and he was OK. That's a very nice prophetic dream. You can reason that the cancer had started producing sensory changes that came up in his dream. [*Larry Burk* writes about similar dreams diagnosing cancer.*]

One of my favorite prophetic dreams was told by a man who was fascinated by horse-racing and the night before the Grand National he dreamt that the winner was a horse called Legal Eagle. Next morning he rushed to his newspaper to look at the field, but no horse with that name was listed. But on the radio that morning he was listening to a program run by a lawyer called Legal Eagle. As it was Grand National Day everyone in the studio took part in a sweepstake on the race. The horse Legal Eagle had drawn was Red Rum and so that was the horse this man felt he had to back.

Did the horse win? Yes, he won a lot of money on it! How on earth are you going to explain that? I don't think you can, except with a sort of interconnection theory. A materialist theory of brain and REM rhythms isn't going to produce a story like that. Remember, these are all stories which were sent to me. Whether they made them up or not, I don't know, but I don't think so. *When I was in my 20s, I used to get snapshots or visions of things that would happen or people I would meet, but it wasn't in a dream state.*

In Past Lives Memories *(1999), how did you gather information about people's past-life memories?* That book was written mainly by reviewing the field and gathering what other people have done. Ian Stevenson produced his book of over 2,000 past-life memories, mainly from India. One of the questions was, "Are they really past-life memories or are they people making them up and wanting money for their past life

memories?" In fact, I think Stevenson's data was absolutely excellent. Jim Tucker has taken on the role from Stevenson. He has a lot of American stories which I think are really interesting. It looks as if information can be carried over and presents a different sort of world from the materialistic one.

Do you have any sense of your own past lives? No. I'd love to have a really good past-life experience. I should have done it because going through past-life regressions was all the craze about 12 years ago. A lot of my friends did and they all came back feeling they'd really been shown their past life and how they died. *Raymond Moody described nine of his past lives in his autobiography* Paranormal: My Life in Pursuit of the Afterlife. *He made the point that they were very innocuous and humble lives.*

In The Art of Dying *(2008) did you find the* Tibetan Book of the Dead *a useful guide?* It was a very interesting guide. The data that is coming out is that the death process is not fearful. The only person who makes it fearful is you. The recent work published by Monica Renz in Switzerland suggests that death is, in fact, an expansion of consciousness. She argues that the first stage in the process of dying is clearing and giving up your attachments. The second stage is a resting phase. Then you go into nonduality, a level of consciousness where the ego is gone and you are left with background consciousness, similar to some of the states that Jeffrey Martin is inducing or helping people to find in themselves through his Finders courses. If you do indeed go nondual before you die, that is a huge expansion of consciousness, not a reduction in consciousness. That is the data. *That fits in with the filter theory because when you are dying the filter drops off.* Absolutely, that would be the argument.

What book are you working on now, you and your productive wife? My authoress wife. It's a book on a man who can show light when he meditates. I've been looking at him and feeling a change in my consciousness, which you can feel when he's meditating. I wondered about the mechanism behind it. It's like an emanation from him rather than the standard aura. *Some people, like John G. Kruth* at the Rhine Research Center, are studying biophotons. Is that the same thing?* If it is biophotons, they don't knock the electrons out of photosensitive material like you get in the vacuum of a digital camera because you can't see this man's light with a

digital camera. Somebody pointed out to me I might see something if I used either infrared or ultraviolet film but I haven't done that experiment yet.

The experiments we have done look at the linkage of his brain with his students' when he is giving light and show that some frequencies of his brain seem to be controlling his students' brains. Some frequencies in his students' brains seem to be related to his brain. There are causative factors which seem to be working on the other person.

Their brain waves synchronize? It's more than that. You can show that the activity in one brain is going to predict accurately, and better than the past history, in another part of the other person's brain. So, in fact, it has a causative relationship. *If he goes into theta wave, then you can predict that his students will follow?* Yes, that's right. He's a very down-to-earth Frenchman who gave up his French nationality and took on Italian nationality to live in Monaco. He's a trust-fund kid and spent a lot of time in cathedrals meditating. *Does he always emanate or is it just when he's in meditation?* Only when he's in meditation.

As a person who has accomplished so much, what do you do for fun? Play. I was very lucky because when I was 17, the RAF offered pilot licenses to people if they wanted to learn to fly because we had just come out of WWII. One of the things that saved us was the RAF. They argued that if there was a large base of people who could fly that might help in the next one. I got a scholarship and was taught to fly. A lot of my life I've borrowed my friends' planes and flown around. That's been great fun.

What else would you like to add? What I recommend is to really study your subject and see if the explanation you are given fits the data or not. What I was finding all the time was that the explanations that I was given for the findings didn't fit them. So you have to look around for a different theory to explain the data you find. If you're interested in consciousness, there are now many methods you can use to expand your consciousness. There have always been technologies to do this, such as Buddhist methods and meditation. You've got the Zen methods of brain watching. All these sorts of things are old technologies but there are now new technologies coming online. See if you have an understanding of what's happening, both in the brain and the brain's relationship to a field of consciousness.

In the face of growing inequality, increasing despotic leaders, climate change and global warming, are you optimistic or pessimistic in the face of these challenges? On an ordinary level, what's happening can only make

one take the pessimistic viewpoint. I can't see us as a species coming together in the way that would be required to halt climate change. But on another level, there is a huge change in the spiritual understanding of a lot of youth. What we're talking about now is an evolution of consciousness, with people starting to use very simple methods that allow it to be expanded. If we get many more people with expanded consciousness this will result in a different direction of humanity.

What do you mean by simple? I was thinking of Jeffrey Martin's classification of consciousness and the changes he produced in people in his Finders course. They flick into levels of consciousness. It's quite fascinating. If that became general, then one would have a very different outlook on the world and the world would change. It goes back to the saying, "If you want to change the world, first change yourself." *Also, if more people understood there are consequences of their actions, even after their death, that might change things as well.* Yes, it might. I hope so because we've got a lot of grandchildren and with the way things are going, they're not going to have a nice life in 20 years when they're starting to bring up their own children. *To bring it back to death and rebirth, karma and reincarnation say we reap what we sow.* Absolutely! And it's worth remembering that you can see that in this life and don't have to wait for a rebirth. I think the main thing is to keep it light, have fun, be kind, and help others.

Books with Elizabeth Fenwick

Living with Epilepsy, 1995
The Hidden Door, 1997
The Truth in the Light, 1995. 2011
Past Lives: An Investigation into Reincarnation Memories, 2001
The Art of Dying, 2008

Brian Leslie Lancaster, Ph.D.

Sacred Science and the Kabbalah

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

How do the Kabbalah, mysticism, transpersonal psychology, spirituality, Neo-Platonism, sacred science and the study of consciousness all fit together for Dr. Lancaster?

What's his perspective on spirituality as a neuroscientist?

What is esoteric physiology?

You were born December 1951. You're a Sagittarius, do you identify with that at all? You commented that there are more Sagittarians amongst the people you're interviewing than other sun signs (10 out of 64), which suggests that there may be potential for empirical study in this regard. Sagittarius is classically the archer, the one who releases an arrow projecting into the future. Maybe that fits with what you're trying to select for in these interviews. *An astrologer told me Sags ask deep questions, so that's another component.* There are deep patterns that are important to us in our lives and I think that's where astrology comes into the picture.

As for how it operates, that's another question. It could be that being born in a particular season has an influence. It may be that particular tendencies in the character were projected onto the heavens, the stars. In other words, the arrangement of planets and stars in relation to a specific spot on earth may not be the causative factor. But I keep an open mind. *It seems to have some usefulness, especially if you look at the whole chart, not just the sun's constellation.* Exactly; I have studied some of the complexities in astrology and it is a fascinating subject, involving complex symbolism which undoubtedly has a valuable role, at least in psychological and spiritual terms. I have Gemini rising and the moon in Pisces.

I'm also interested in the typology of the Myers-Briggs. As a psychologist, I'm very interested in Jung's ideas, but I've never been a great fan of questionnaire typologies. Since you requested that I check out the Myers-Briggs, I did so, and I'm an ENFP. *Ps do not like these kinds of tests at all because they don't like to be put in boxes.* That fits. *As a J, I love typologies. Only two men are sensing, everyone else is intuitive, and there are 25 Ps and 29 Js. Ps like open options, Js like to check things off their lists and move forward. So it looks like a profile of the group is scientists who are intuitive and more extroverted than traditional scientists.*

One of the questions I'm asking people is birth order because the book Rebel Scientists *found they were likely to be later born. What's your birth order?* I was third of three. *In this group, there are more first-born scientists.*

You've taught in Israel and the US, as well as the UK. Do you find that you shift your approach depending on what nationality you're teaching? Yes, this is an interesting question. I run online programs for the Alef Trust with students from all over the world. I may be teaching at the same time someone from China, from the States, and from Europe and find

differences, both in my approach and in the responses and aspirations of students in different regions. For example, when I taught in Israel, my focus was more on the Jewish system of Kabbalah and relating that to psychology, a topic of great interest to me.

When I'm teaching online, I tend to take a broader stance. As for the students, those from the US are much more interested in experience; I think that relates to the immediacy of things because there's nothing more immediate than experience. I see more openness to creative exploration amongst Americans than is the case for our students from Eastern countries, for example. This sounds somewhat of a cliché but I think it's true. In Europe and the UK, in particular, there's a more reserved quality. I can be a little bit more spontaneous with the US audiences. It's all good fun and keeps me on my toes. *I taught clairvoyant and healing workshops in Japan for years. I really had to stand on my head to get them to start dialoguing.* Exactly. *But after a while it was lively.* In the East, they're not so eager to get into an explorative mindset, which is so important with transpersonal psychology.

You and your wife Jessica founded the Alef Trust.[35] We started it up seven years ago. I was a professor at Liverpool John Moores University, where I believe I was the first professor of transpersonal psychology in the UK. For various reasons I felt the work I'd done at the university was coming to an end. Universities were becoming much more of a marketplace and the values were no longer the ones I shared. I began exploring the idea of teaching through an independent, not-for-profit organization. It wasn't always easy teaching these topics that interest me like transpersonal psychology and mystical areas in mainstream university psychology departments. Nevertheless, I think my work in advancing these topics within the university sector has been important.

In the US, you have more specialized institutes like CIIS (California Institute of Integral Studies) or IONS (Institute of Noetic Sciences). But I think the major US universities were less open to diverse, more spiritually-oriented topics in the 1980s when I was developing my teaching in the UK. By about 2010, it felt like the time was right to launch an independent organization through which we can offer programs of study that are validated or accredited by a university, which could be more innovative.

Alef Trust very much brings together the creative background of my wife, Jessica, and my own aspirations. She is a performing artist who brings

a flair for embodied exploration of consciousness and I draw on my background in cognitive neuroscience and the study of mysticism. Transpersonal psychology is the one "brand" that seems able to accommodate the breadth of our interests and those of our students. I was one of the pioneers at my university to develop online learning since I saw how important it was going to be in the future. In setting up the Alef Trust, we wanted to explore the potential of online learning, not simply in conveying ideas but also in facilitating embodied and transformative learning. We have tutors from the States, South Africa, other areas of Europe, and students from all over the world, so it's very exciting.

Do you give your lectures live? In my heart of hearts, I'm a teacher; that's what I love doing. I've spent time writing and I've conducted research, but when you're teaching a group and you see a light going on in someone's eyes that is the most thrilling thing for me. *And when they laugh at your jokes.* Yes, exactly. There's a great deal you can do online and you can have that direct contact like you and I are having on Skype.

At the Alef Trust, we emphasize the community side of what we're doing and the importance of being present. I certainly don't throw a lecture online and ask students to give me an essay or whatever. We run live webinars, we use a learning interface so students have forums and webinars during real time, and we have scholarly materials and give students guidance for working with it. It's a complex array.

The "proof of the pudding is in the eating" and we get amazing feedback from our students who truly value what they gain through their time with us. Indeed, when they graduate, most want to stay in the community. We become strongly connected with our students and alumni, as they do with each other and we have a great community, which is at the core of what I do. Our programs look at the recent research in the topic areas, recent scientific ideas, and I teach about consciousness and mysticism. People who join our community are searching for like-minded people who share their interest in spirituality and want to engage in both a scholarly and experiential way. We offer an approach that has an academic backbone whilst at the same time emphasizing the importance of practice and experience.

In our programs, we focus on the transformative impact of education and recognize that people's individual practices are crucial in the transpersonal spiritual arena. At the same time, our courses are validated by

mainstream UK universities so we can't get away with lazy thinking. I think what brings people together is this sense of shared interest in the renewal of spirituality, which is distinctive in our day, together with a foundation of academic rigor. We're running a Masters in Consciousness, Spirituality, and Transpersonal Psychology and we have students doing Ph.D.s in these areas as well.

Do you trace the renewed interest in spirituality to the 1960s? The '60s were a very important era. I was a teenager in the '60s so I'm sure that decade was influential on me. Living in the Liverpool region, I would have to mention the Beatles as they epitomized the creative outpouring of pent-up energy. With hindsight, we can understand patterns over historical periods. Certainly, you can understand the '60s only if you understand the '50s, which was so much about the aftermath of WWII in this country, and probably in the States as well. It was a continuation in many ways, and certainly a consequence, of WWI, which was very much about a change of era.

Consciousness revolves around these kinds of leaps that occur in society and developments in technology. The seeds of change grew in the 1960s but they were sown earlier, with the Beatnik movement in the '50s, for example. But, on a larger scale, the 20th century was all about replacing old structures, old ways of organizing society. The exploration of our spiritual core and the essence of consciousness must be understood in that context.

Futurist Alvin Toffler traces major social changes to developments in technology from agriculture to the industrial revolution to the computer and information era. Do you agree that technological changes are pivotal? Definitely. As a psychologist, the way we conceive the mind can be traced historically; where we see cultural change has always been fed by the forefront of technology. Going back to the 1950s, the telephone exchange provided an analogy for the workings of the brain, with neurons paralleling the wires being connected in a super switchboard. From the '60s onwards, the preferred model drew on computing. When holographic information was understood, the brain was assumed to operate via holographic processing.

Today, many draw on ideas from quantum mechanics to model brain functioning. Definitely, there is a complex interplay between research in psychology, neuroscience, and technological developments, which also

impact the culture. *Transpersonal psychology was influenced by Eastern religions that became popular with the Beatles and the '60s.*

There are also interesting parallels between our age and the early Renaissance, a classic flowering of culture. What triggered that explorative spirit, which was so critical to the development of art, philosophy, and new creative lines of thought? When you look at the triggers you see parallels with today's changes. For example, the spirit of discovery was evident in the great explorers, the great voyages of discovery. The parallel in our day came with space exploration.

A crucial development for the Renaissance was printing, which led to a revolution in the dissemination of ideas. The parallel for us is the internet, also a quantum leap in terms of dissemination of information. In the early Renaissance, a number of the major Christian thinkers encountered Islamic and Jewish philosophy and mysticism, which led to an expansion in their worldview. This also triggered new and creative reformulations of mystical systems and our vision of the place we occupy in the world order. In our new renaissance, the input from Eastern traditions plays a similar role in expanding our horizons. When you encounter a new tradition, when a culture is opened up to others, it leads to a spirit of renewal and a creative explosion in the culture.

Let's go back to your personal history. Were you raised in a Jewish family? Yes, I'm Jewish by birth but I grew up in an environment that was not strongly Jewish. I was the only Jewish child in my school. We celebrated the Jewish festivals, but I wasn't exposed as a child or teenager to the depths of Jewish learning. That came later in my 20s when I discovered the Kabbalah and through that began to realize that the whole rabbinic world gave me a potent heritage. I would say that my upbringing wasn't intensely religious, but that I grew up in two cultures—Jewish culture and the counter-culture of the '60s. *Many of the visionary scientists have the same Jewish background, much more than the percentage of the general population. They weren't really particularly religious, they're reformed Jews, maybe they weren't even Bar Mitzvahed.*

What is it about that culture that encourages Jews to be such innovators? How long have we got? Jewish culture and history are fascinating and one of the factors is the tradition of learning as a central value. Historically speaking, Jewish kids were getting an education when those around them weren't going to school. There are specific aspects to the

Jewish tradition bound up with it being a kind of minority culture in exile. So the Jewish mind was always looking through the cracks. Because of anti-Semitic pressures, they were barred from many professions and Jewish communities were isolated, so Jews were not able to enter mainstream culture and diverted to a kind of secret culture.

Part of that secret culture was the idea of penetrating beneath the surface of things; a central Jewish value for thousands of years entails probing under the surface of the scripture, the Torah. The tradition of learning is always to look between the cracks—why did Moses say something in that particular way, why is this specific letter included in a given place, why is this word used? All these kinds of questions would be asked in a traditional Jewish learning environment and became more acute within the esoteric tradition. That spirit of exploration was a mainstream value.

If we go back hundreds of years, philosophical learning was channeled within the religion in relation to the scriptures, and so on. I think in the modern era, that sense of exploration—of looking through the cracks—is something that we have as a heritage. People moved away from religion but the same spirit of delving behind the surface comes out in physics and psychology, for example. Einstein and Freud are primary examples and you also find disproportionate numbers of Jews amongst the pioneers in these areas. A profoundly questing intellectual outlook linked to a deep-seated desire to contribute to the greater good, beyond the ghetto walls—these are the motivators that many Jews brought with them into modernity.

Asian students who are immigrants also have the tradition of scholarship and do very well. But I don't have any Asian visionary scientists in the Trilogy, so there's something about their culture that made them excel academically but not be pioneers. I teach Asian people and I recognize what you're saying. My grandparents were immigrants to the UK, so my parents were first-generation. A shared value amongst the first generation is to ensure that the second generation integrates, that they excel. It's this crazy cliché about becoming doctors and lawyers. The same generational structure is found with Asian immigrants. The difference with Jewish history is about being in exile in that modern Jewish history, in a sense, starts with the destruction of the Temple during the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

From the ashes of the temple what arises is a new religion, the religion of Jesus, Christianity, a reformulated notion of Judaism. What we call Rabbinic Judaism also grew from those ashes. If we go back beyond 2,000 years, Jews practiced in ways that were of their time—a different age. It was a temple-based cult involving sacrifices. Around 2,000 years ago a cultural shift occurred in the age with the movements that gave rise to Christianity and the inception of what became rabbinical Judaism.

That laid the seeds of the experience of exile where Jewish communities were the minority within predominantly Christian or Islamic cultures and were subject to great persecution. I think the combination of the value placed on learning, the leanings towards mysticism, the eschatological idea of promoting a golden age to come, and the pressures of being in exile were hugely formative for Jews entering the modern era. This is a potent mix that breeds pioneers!

Why did you decide to go to university to study psychology and go on to graduate school? You know how it is when you're a child and adults ask, "What are you going to do when you grow up?" you develop a stock answer and mine was that I was going to be a doctor. I was always fascinated by the workings of the body. I studied zoology, animals, and humans. When I was 16 or 17, applying for university to do medicine, I had the form in front of me when I stopped and thought, "Why am I doing this? I don't want to be sitting in a physician's clinic meeting crazy people and writing prescriptions. I want to understand the mind and study psychology."

Before we get into that, what have been the most difficult times in your life and how did you cope? I was born with a facial paralysis, which continues to have an impact on me. When I was very young I had difficulty speaking labial sounds which require the lips to come together, so when I started school at four or five I couldn't say my name, which is Brian. But I have a middle name, Leslie, with no labials. My parents had the inspired idea of encouraging me to switch to using the name Leslie or Les, the name by which most know me today. Imagine what it is for a young child not to be able to speak his name and the burden of a facial disfigurement. In hindsight, I think these difficulties were highly formative in shaping not only my character but also my interests.

On the professional front, it was challenging back in the 1970s and '80s to find a way to integrate my interests in consciousness and mysticism into my work as an academic. These were largely taboo areas for academic

psychology! I first encountered a teacher of the Kabbalah when I was in my early 20s and already had interests in states of consciousness and spiritual practices. Exploring these topics in an engaged, participatory manner was absolutely central to my growth, yet the idea that anything mystical or spiritual would be in any way relevant to research in psychology was absolutely out of bounds. It was like I had a day job which was out-of-synch with my real aspirations but I always had the sense that things would come together.

The study of consciousness was unheard of in mainstream psychology, but I set up an undergraduate course studying consciousness, probably one of the first ones in the UK. I remember being grilled by a board of professors in order to bring in a new course in the university environment. I was quite young and the board members were all grey old men, as I thought of them, and indeed they were all men! They didn't get it, but they passed it so maybe I persuaded them, but there were some challenges there.

Some people find that having children is a real challenge, especially for the parents' relationship. I've had two families in my life. I have two children from my first marriage and I currently have a nine-year-old. I love them all and I wouldn't exchange anything. But if I'm trying to write the great work, the one that will get the Nobel Prize, sometimes there are challenges in allotting my time. I do have to give the bedtime stories, no question. Which is the priority? *The bedtime story!* Absolutely!

How did you get interested in transpersonal psychology? I was lecturing at Liverpool Polytechnic (which became Liverpool John Moores University). In my early 20s, I was offered a position at a mainstream university in the UK but I decided against it because I found mainstream university psychology to be so narrow. Because the institution where I was working was not yet a university, I had more freedom.

I had a good colleague at the polytechnic, Mike Daniels, who was an expert in moral development and child development, while my area was neuroscience. He was very interested in transpersonal psychology and later we were able to set up a postgraduate program in Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology. I came to realize through him that the discipline of transpersonal psychology could house my interests in the psychological aspects of mystical traditions. To actually build a center for studying the

transpersonal and the spiritual within what became a mainstream university wasn't so easy. That goes back to what I said earlier about challenges.

I am fascinated by mysticism and have been deeply involved in the practical exploration of the nature of mind and spirituality. In my 30s I was really getting into the academic study of consciousness, while my interests outside academia were in mysticism and spiritual practice. Through my collaboration with Mike, I began to see that there was this whole field of transpersonal psychology and in the late '80s, I could see that the ground was fertile for bringing my interests together. That's when I wrote my first book, *Mind, Brain, and Human Potential* (1991), to attempt to bring mysticism and psychology together.

What have you experienced personally in terms of the transpersonal? What's the Kabbalistic spiritual practice that you use? I began meditating in my early 20s. What I understand of spiritual practice is complex because there are meditative, ritual, and concentrative practices. There are practices that have to do with how we relate the microcosm and the macrocosm through many dimensions of practice. In terms of my own experience, I recall a time when my understanding of heart transformed. Of course, I had read much about chakras and sacred anatomy. But to truly experience a sense of the heart opening, of it growing to become an organ of perception and understanding—that was hugely important to me. [*See Rollin McCraty.**] The great teachings were no longer just words on a page but pointed to an embodied reality. There are all kinds of senses in the body and more esoteric dimensions to our faculties.

Similarly, I have had powerful experiences of synchronicity, which underpins my conviction that the physical and psychological spheres are fundamentally interconnected. I would say the main focus of these experiences is the sense that everything is meaningful: there is no such thing as chance. It can sound simplistic, like fate and destiny, but it recognizes that the quality of meaning is a fundamental reality. We conventionally think that matter is the fundamental reality; I have lived my life since my 20s believing that meaning is the fundamental reality. That's what I have experienced through things like synchronicities and my sense of what matters in my life, the people I meet, and what opens up in particular times. It's not simply a question of moments of mindfulness.

Times have changed a lot since when I was writing in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. There's a lot of interest in issues like the psychology and

neuroscience of mindfulness. The opening up of psychology and other scientific approaches to traditions such as Buddhist meditation has been crucial and has really changed the discipline, but it's not enough.

We're talking about what is real. We're not just talking about a state of mindfulness, being a bit more present, being more in control of tensions and sources of stress, doing things that are more healthy, etc. We're talking about something that I think is much deeper than that, referred to as the unconscious psyche, the soul, or spirit. The greatest spiritual traditions are about those realizations. And the danger is to embrace only the superficial aspects of our spirituality rather than delving into the deeper aspects.

You mentioned esoteric physiology; does that include auras, chakras, and meridians? This goes into my interest in the Kabbalah rather than parapsychology. What I am interested in is ideas, patterns of knowledge. If you study Kabbalistic texts from the 13th century, for example, you find them discussing many aspects of the brain, but of course, they're not talking about neuroscience in a modern sense; they're talking about an esoteric idea.

At the core is the idea of correspondence between levels above and below, the microcosm and macrocosm. We find patterns in the mind called archetypes, as well as in outer reality. In the Kabbalah, the idea is that the organs we have, like the brain and heart, conform to a deeper plan. You could look at it through a modern parallel with genetics as the genes convey a pattern, a plan. The kabbalists didn't know anything about genes but they had the same idea in a more esoteric form.

Is this similar to the Platonic idea of ideal forms that function as a template? Yes, Kabbalah is often viewed as an essentially neo-Platonic system. Kabbalah, which comes from a Hebrew root, meaning "to receive," is the received tradition. The meaning of receive in this context has some ambiguity because you learn it from a teacher but also ultimately you receive it directly from a deeper source. Although major forms of Jewish mysticism have a much longer history, the term Kabbalah is associated with the essentially neo-Platonic scheme that circulated in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The idea of the Tree of Life, the pattern of *sefirot*, or divine emanations, arrived in written form in the 12th century. Of course, these written sources distill more oral traditions that have a much longer history. Some of the fundamental ideas of this mystical system may be traced back

to Egyptian and Assyrian culture. But speculation can be dangerous; it is the written texts that fascinate me.

One of the things that really interested me, which is why the organization we started is called the Alef Trust, concerns the mysticism in language and Hebrew letters. Jewish mysticism is quintessentially a mysticism of language and that relates to my interest in patterns and language is the biggest pattern-forming tool that we have. The Kabbalists penetrated into the structure of language so that Hebrew letters themselves convey mystical ideas or esoteric ideas. In my practice, I work with a series of movement forms designed to capture the profound esoteric meaning of the Hebrew letters.

The same is true for Sanskrit. Yes, they're both sacred languages. The letter Alef has no sound of its own which is very odd for a letter in the language; the idea is that silence is the beginning of everything, for silence, or nothingness, depicts that which we cannot name—the Source. You can also trace the letter Alef to the Egyptian hieroglyph of the ox. The Roman letter A has preserved the horns of the ox, but they're pointing downwards. It's fascinating to trace the history of the alphabet in such ways. Why was the first letter connected with an ox? It's about the primordial energy of creation and an ox represents that energy being harnessed. What we do with the Alef Trust is very much about silence because that's meditative—recognizing the void in all things.

At the same time, we have the challenge of understanding that huge energy of creation and how we work with that. How we can tune in to the macrocosm through ritual, for example. *In the beginning was the word.* Absolutely. The ox herding images that we find in Buddhist texts go back to Daoism as well. The images of the monk seeing a bull and trying to capture it and tame it point to the inner work. They're metaphors of our journey as spiritual beings. *Is it related to yoga, meaning yoke because oxen are yoked?* They all intersect, don't they? Patterns are the fundamentals of the human condition; what fires me up is these important fundamentals and how we reach our potential, how we engage with a richer way of being, and the consequences for ourselves, each other, to our world, to our environment.

In terms of neurophysiology, what are your interests from the physiological point of view? My research was on the hemispheres of the brain, the relationship between left and right. We worked with brain-

damaged patients and the consequences of damage. Now I'm more interested in building models of the nature of mind, understanding the relationship between spiritual and mystical ideas about how the mind works and relating them to cognitive neuroscientific material. An example is the Buddhist Abhidhamma tradition, which is the wisdom literature in the Theravada tradition, a small part of which analyzes how we perceive.

The Abhidhamma identifies different moments and processes for how we come to perceive the world. I analyze what they're saying about these different stages in relation to neuroscience in order to understand the very interesting parallels between the two. Of course, the difference is the Abhidhamma derives from introspective experiences of monks who delve deeply through meditation and other practices and are interested in the transformative potential of knowledge. We see the first-person understanding of "what is going on in *my* mind" versus the third person approach of neurosciences. I'm generating models that integrate cognitive neuroscientific data with the insights captured in esoteric or spiritual traditions.

Much of the research on spirituality and psychology is about one side trying to prove itself against the other side. A neuroscientist can observe the pattern of brain activity in those who meditate and it is clear that meditation does give rise to distinctive patterns of activity. Simply observing which parts of the brain become active tells us little about the value of meditation, however. The neuroscientific perspective endeavors to fit the spiritual change into the paradigm of materialist science. If the Buddhist monk says that he or she is a reincarnation of some other being, the scientist can't study that in the materialist vision of mainstream science.

I'm interested in a more generative way of integrating mysticism and science. Building models of the mind that draw on scientific and mystical data allows us to generate new hypotheses for further testing. Buddhists, for example, have great insight into the micro-processes of mind, just as neuroscience identifies rapid brain processes. I'm working on a more generative way of bringing these two together. What kind of new hypotheses can we generate? How can bringing these two kinds of description—scientific and experiential—advance our understanding of consciousness and our aspirations to attain higher states?

The Buddhist texts identify a series of stages in the process of perception, most of which the untrained observer doesn't notice; we are

normally conscious of the end result only. It's the same with neuroscience; there is a series of steps in the perceptual process, most of which are normally understood as preconscious. In modelling the stages through which an individual becomes conscious of seeing something, I use the Buddhist framework to give meaning to the neuroscientific observations.

For example, one of the Buddhist stages translates as "examining." In my model, this corresponds to neural processing whereby stored patterns of activity become integrated with current activity in sensory neurons. The parallel to the Buddhist examine stage lies in the brain systems favoring those sensory patterns of activity that match with pre-existing stored patterns. And in the end stage, we consciously see only that which was matched with those stored patterns; rather than witnessing what is actually present, the brain's perceptual processing imposes memory patterns onto the present sensory input.

There is plenty of psychological evidence indicating that memory can dominate seeing. [*See this video to experience this idea.*[36]] The neuroscience provides an understanding of the mechanism. But what the Buddhist material brings to the model is understanding of the ways to overcome the bias due to such memory activity influencing the perceptual process. In Buddhist terms, this stage of examining is karmically active. The task of the person on the path to enlightenment is to oppose the bias, to overcome this source of negative karma.

I'm also interested in the way in which 12th and 13th-century Kabbalistic texts use the Hebrew, or Aramaic, for "brain." Can there be a constructive dialogue between the knowledge encoded in these texts and contemporary neuroscience? As an example, there are interesting parallels in their respective treatment of lateralization: Just as neuroscience demonstrates that left and right hemispheres of the brain have distinctive qualities, so the Kabbalists ascribed differing qualities to left and right that seem to correspond to the differences discovered by neuroscience. Of course, the 13th-century mystics weren't probing brains with electrodes but they did have insights into what they understood as the patterns of creation.

The *Zohar*, which is the major source of Kabbalistic wisdom, uses the term "brain" in the context of describing the "faces" of God. Now, of course, the author is not giving us idolatrous images. Detail of these faces is intended to convey the dynamic through which the unknowable divine essence manifests in the process of creation. The topic is too complex to

capture here. But in brief, the constituents of each face—skull, brain, eyes, and so on—are symbolic of the unfolding of creation.

Crucially, for any psychological analysis, the operation of these structures in humans is understood to correspond to their divine "template." The divine "brain" is said to expand into 32 paths (the paths of the "tree of life," for those acquainted with the Kabbalah), paralleling the fact that we have a spinal cord extending from the brain which gives rise to 31 pairs of spinal nerves.

Beyond this simple point of anatomical correspondence, I became interested in the functional organization. A major discovery in neuroscience was that of neural *binding*, through which neurons concurrently active in relation to a given stimulus become aligned in terms of their electrochemical oscillations. I argue that such binding reflects the pattern the *Zohar* describes as *unification*, again viewed as a critical aspect of the patterns in creation. Another point of correspondence between the map provided by the *Zohar* and models constructed by contemporary neuroscientists may be found in the idea of *reflexivity*. Both the human and the "divine" systems are characterized by a reflexive pattern whereby lower regions are modulated by the activity they seed in higher regions.

Again, the detail is probably too complex to elucidate here, but the key point is that modern science can be seen to validate critical aspects of the seminal teaching of the Kabbalah, and many other esoteric traditions, that the macrocosm and the microcosm are in a dynamic relationship based in correspondence: "As above, so below," as the old adage has it. Vindicating this insight into the order inherent in all things is hugely important in our day; not only for giving us a greater sense of meaning and purpose, but also to instill a greater sense of responsibility. In a very real sense, the microcosmic-macrocosmic rapport means that we must ensure that our global environment is harmonious.

In addition to our physical anatomy, we carry an "esoteric" anatomy whereby bodily features and processes reflect the dynamics of creation—the idea of microcosm reflecting the macrocosm. For the mystics, these patterns reflect the divine; whether or not we ascribe the patterns to a divine source today is beside the point. There is an inner dynamic that connects us to the cosmos and our responsibility for our planet can be seen in this more mystical context. There is a fundamental sense in which the patterning of

things can be understood mystically or scientifically. The issue that interests me is how we bring these two into relationship in 21st century terms.

So it's a hologram? Yes, there is a pattern and all things reflect that pattern. I know there are great insights in the ancient traditions because I've practiced these systems. I have some understanding of their depths, so I do not think their value is merely historical or literary. There is a basis to their insights that has value for us, not only in terms of our spiritual aspirations but also for our endeavors to understand consciousness and the mind. And science itself is changing. The idea of the scientist detached from what is being researched is no longer appropriate.

We all participate in a reality that is being re-created continually and the scientific paradigm is slowly moving to accommodate a more spiritual and ecological view. If our theories on consciousness suggest that there is nothing beyond mechanism or materialism, then that's what we will create ourselves as. Scientists have a huge responsibility to consider the societal value and moral implications of theories they generate. We are beings with direction and the universe is not simply a random aimless entity. That's what's important and that's what psychology needs to understand.

Do you think yin, *the Chinese concept, is like the right brain and* yang *is like the left?* There are certainly parallels here. Again, the Chinese system is fundamentally a recognition that our reality is grounded on recurring patterns; the concepts of yin and yang are at the root of the patterns. Everything is based in polarity and in that sense, the brain reflects a deeper pattern.

I read that women tend to have more integration through the corpus callosum and men are more specialized in their brain hemisphere. Is that accurate? It's kind of an evolution-couched theory in terms of what were their functions in the hunter-gatherer Stone Age societies where the skills of the right hemisphere, in terms of spatial relationships, were more important for the males as hunters. Language maybe was more important for women in terms of social structure and family dynamics. Of course, we're a product of our history in the sense of the evolutionary instincts we have, but let's look forward. A parallel here is Carl Jung's treatment of alchemy. The thrust of Jung's work was about translating the great truths of esoteric traditions into terminology that makes sense in a 20th century context.

He said that Western culture suffers because it's been so male-dominated and the Archetype of the Great Mother and the feminine has

been denigrated. I hear people talking about how there is an upwelling of this female, more integrative archetype. The rise of the feminine over the past 100 years or so is a major rebalancing of culture, of the psyche. Jung construed such ideas in terms of the collective; the psyche changes over time, both individually and collectively. And there is no question about the change in our day whereby the feminine quality of the psyche is re-asserting itself.

When I say that ancient texts may have some value for us, such as the 12th and 13th century Kabbalistic works, I didn't mean to imply that they aren't dated in key ways. Not only were these texts written by men for men, but also the systems of thought they propagate are male-oriented; they are a product of their time. Now, I may be a traditionalist in some regards, for example, I think some of the older rituals can be very powerful and that we dilute them at our peril. Nevertheless, the upwelling of the feminine is not ephemeral, but a crucial rebalancing of the collective psyche and a tradition such as that of the Kabbalah will change to be in line with this rebalancing. The rebalancing manifests in the outer world, where women are asserting themselves more in cultural, social, and business pursuits.

But the dynamic that interests me is the inner concomitant, the balancing of the psyche and the soul. A real challenge for us today is that of understanding these inner dynamics and their outer manifestations. In Judaism, the feminine divine is termed the *Shekhinah*, the face of God, that we can find in the world of our immediate experience, the immanent divine. The idea of the Shekhinah is present in rabbinic writings much earlier, but it is only in the 12th and 13th centuries, with the flowering of mysticism in the Kabbalah, that she becomes a major player on the cosmic stage. The rise of the feminine in that period in Judaism may have been related to the cult of Mary in Christianity that had become a major popular feature. [*See Hurtak.**] But, critically, neither in Christianity nor in Judaism did these expressions of the feminine in religion depose the masculine-dominated power and psychological structures.

This took away women's sexuality because you're either virgin or whore. I think that was the case for Christianity. Kabbalistic imagery of the period included a potent sexual dynamic and Judaism never placed celibacy on a pedestal. Intimacy between husband and wife was framed within the Kabbalistic imagery of the dynamics between the masculine and feminine

potencies within the divine. But the feminine was cast as a passive participant: That's what's changing in our day.

Trump seemed to be the archetype of the negative animus of masculinity, the worst of male traits. My hope is that he brought this into the light to release. Change and birth are associated with trauma in birth pangs. *Are you hopeful in the face of the autocrats getting elected around the world, global warming, and growing inequality, that human beings will make it?* Maybe. In the larger scale of things, it's a kind of conceit to think we're pulling all those strings when we're not. Our world changes through the divine-human partnership. We must play our part, but—crucially important—we have to tune in to what is unfolding in the collective psyche.

Am I an optimist? Yes, because I see a resurgence of spirituality in broadly healthy forms, because there are significant moves toward a non-materialist science. Recognizing the reality and value of transcendent states has changed the nature of science and we are witnessing a growing sense of moral responsibility in research. We feel responsibility for climate in other areas of the globe; globalization is a powerful reality and I believe it is reflective of the more mystical goal of unification. I'm a glass half-full kind of person. Yes, of course, there are really big issues and the potential for major catastrophe is very real, but I see the resurgence of the human spirit.

What evidence do you have that science has changed? The interest in meditation, the interest in compassion, for example. I think there's a serious groundswell of interest in spiritual values and spiritual practices which has influenced the academy. For example, in my area of research into consciousness, the prevailing view has been materialist: The fundamental reality is that of matter, and—so the orthodoxy held—we have a particular form of matter that we call the brain and this lump of matter is solely responsible for generating consciousness.

That view is strongly under threat and many mainstream scientists are now suggesting that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of the universe, not produced by matter or force. Perhaps consciousness is inherent in the Big Bang and therefore everything in the universe is, in a sense, conscious. This is complex, but the key point is that consciousness is not *one thing*. A rock is certainly not conscious in the way that I am, but what is being suggested is that the essence of consciousness, what some term proto-consciousness, pervades all.

I looked at the University of California at Santa Cruz because they have a History of Consciousness program but the components of their program are sociological. There was nothing about the transpersonal or psi phenomena. Clearly, the US university system is behind where we are in the UK! The Master's program we're running through the Alef Trust is validated through the UK university system. While the program explores some leading-edge ideas, and we emphasize the importance of experience in the context of transpersonal growth, it is grounded in the disciplines of academia. We draw on scholarly work and high-quality research, encourage our students to use well-grounded research designs and employ innovative teaching methods. It is for these reasons that we are accredited by mainstream universities.

You teach for Sofia University in California? I was involved with Ph.D. students with Sofia. I ran a course on consciousness at CIIS, California Institute of Integral Studies. Those are two different institutions. The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto became Sofia University, which focuses on transpersonal psychology. CIIS promotes a range of areas, not just transpersonal psychology, East/West psychology, and other aspects of contemporary thinking in consciousness research.

What about other transpersonal psychology courses? Steve Taylor* works with us at the Alef Trust. He studied with me at Liverpool John Moores University and now has a position at Leeds Beckett University in personal psychology, which includes aspects of transpersonal thinking. There's the University of West Georgia which brings in the transpersonal. *I think West Georgia is just one teacher, Christine Simmonds-Moore.** Yes, she studied with me as well, so it's a small world but we've grown. I would make a distinction between parapsychology and transpersonal psychology. The former is about high-quality methodological studies and research to demonstrate these anomalous phenomena, while transpersonal psychology is more about understanding the mind to understand how we can achieve spiritual and psychological growth.

I have to ask you to define consciousness. I don't think you can define consciousness. It's like if I said what is matter? If something is a fundamental property of the universe then you cannot define it in terms of anything else. We can explain how the smallest elements of matter are built into larger entities, but any definition of matter itself is tautological because any other term (e.g., the "physical") merely connotes the same thing.

Similarly with consciousness: A definition of consciousness in terms of awareness, for example, would be tautological. But we can think about the functions of consciousness and the ways in which consciousness operates.

My view is that the function of consciousness concerns transformation and that consciousness is essentially about relating to a higher level of being. As for the way in which consciousness operates, I have argued that we have to identify several dimensions. The core aspect is experience or phenomenality. The fact that you have experiences not explained by the brain. If you talk about consciousness in the way that most cognitive scientists do, you have to bring in the notion of intentionality, that consciousness is about something.

Random number generators (RNGs) respond to human intentions, so there is some reactive quality even by machines. That's a slightly different point about psychokinesis, which goes back to the patterns I'm interested in. On a deeper level, matter and mind are not separate and consciousness is the medium through which all connects. So if the RNG is responding to intention, then the medium for that to occur is through consciousness.

Returning to the different dimensions of consciousness, in humans, consciousness becomes operational in relation to what I term the "I narrative." We construct a narrative centered on the ego and it is that narrative which dominates mundane consciousness. Mystical states are ones in which that mundane I-focused narrative is transcended. In my book on *Approaches to Consciousness,* I discuss these dimensions and the role of mysticism in depth. The "I narrative" gives us a sense of being in control but spiritual traditions suggest to us that we are not as much in control as we think we are —this is confirmed by much research in psychology. The immediate mundane experience is the sense of "I" so when I say to you, Gayle, you're hearing my voice and thinking of your questions, all the mental activity is happening in relation to your sense of yourself. In this sense, it's an "I-narrative."

You write about the "multiple brain." My experience as a conscious being is of a unified reality. I don't experience parts of my world and have to put them together. Conscious experience is that of a seamless reality. Yet it has proved elusive to find a brain region that corresponds to that unity. The brain is multiple in the sense that it has regions, or processes, that operate more-or-less independently. In relation to visual perception, for example, one set of neurons responds to the wavelength of light, signaling

information about what we perceive as color. Another set of neurons is responding to movement. Yet another set is activated only by faces. So all these diverse aspects are occurring in parallel. But how do they come together? When I see you, I don't think, "There's a bit of color here and she's nodding her head and the edge of her face is there." I see one integrated whole.

We know a lot about all the different parts of the brain and how they function, but it is not easy to answer this question as to how the diverse processing systems are integrated, how it all comes together. The term, "the multiple brain" (which others introduced initially, not me) is just a way of expressing this conundrum. This question of how the diversity of brain processing becomes integrated is highly poignant in the case of identity, or the nature of self. Are we really as integrated as we think we are? There are cases of Dissociative Identity Disorder where clearly the processes relating to our sense of being a unified person are not so effectively integrated. Many argue that this condition is an extreme of what is the case for all of us. [*See Bernardo Kastrup.**]

Our sense of being a self, of having a unified identity, may be an illusion. If we speak of sub-personalities, then the question is, subsidiary to what? Perhaps we need to recognize that all aspects of our everyday experience of "I" are subsidiary to a kind of higher self. Normally, we are not conscious of this more holistic, or complete, self; so we inhabit parts of ourselves, as it were. I would argue that the higher, integrated whole is what has been conveyed in religious and spiritual terms as the *soul*. Transpersonal psychology is the discipline that tries to view the soul in psychological terms.

One of the central teachings in the Kabbalah concerns unification. An objective for medieval kabbalists was to unify the divine. But the practices they employed could equally be viewed as bringing unification to the individual psyche. Advancing unification at the cosmic level necessitated bringing order and unification to one's own psyche—at least that may be a way of conceptualizing it in modern terms. Again, we see a pattern: Disassociation and its complement, unification, can be seen as defining features at the brain level, at the psychological level, and at the spiritual level. The soul is glimpsed through the veils of these patterns that recur across different levels of being.

In some ways, could you equate that to God as the intelligence that underlies patterns? Yes, that is definitely true. The question is, what do we mean by the word, God? It conveys the idea of meaning in the cosmos, a sense of intelligence, or of order within chaos. The image of some kind of super-person is simply childish. We need to rediscover the more sophisticated ideas of divine order that predated the naïve imagery of recent, especially Christian, epochs. In many ways, it was the mystics who carried the more sophisticated sense of the divine as the imprinter of order, unity within multiplicity.

The other key issue is that of immanence and transcendence. To conceptualize the divine in terms of a kind of cosmic intelligence evades confronting the meaning of transcendence. Most religions hold that ultimately God totally transcends the world of time and space. In our day we struggle to understand transcendence since it goes to the core of questions concerning what is actually real—ontological questions. Transpersonal psychology explores experiences of transcending the ego, the "I."

We might call this "soft transcendence" in that there is no implication of ascending to a totally other realm, that is, a heavenly realm as portrayed in religion. Modern physics demonstrates that the world is far more complex than was ever imagined in earlier ages. There may be 10 or 11 dimensions to reality. So who knows? Maybe the transcendent as conceived in religions such as Islam and Judaism can be re-configured as relating to dimensions of this world that lie beyond the reach of normal experience. This way of thinking penetrates into the quest to develop a paradigm that can be operational within an expanded vision of science and which is no longer limited to an outmoded materialist framework. All branches of science will ultimately benefit from this new paradigm.

What's the purpose of your *Sacred Wisdoms Archive?* This is something I'm doing with Rosemary Anderson, an Emerita Professor at Sofia University. We developed the Sacred Science Circle which promotes the idea that science can be an expression of a sacred quest: *"*All science quests to discern the patterns and forces that lie beyond what is immediately apparent. Such quests become sacred when undertaken in a spirit of reverence, embarking on a journey of transformation."[37]

Rosemary and I emphasize that the sacred quest is enriched by scientific knowledge. The archive is for those who share our vision and may

find the resources useful. We try to pull together the insights from mystical and spiritual traditions that have a bearing on contemporary scientific research, especially in psychology. The challenge is to reformulate those insights in modern terms without compromising their integrity.

Sacred science is focused on understanding the patterns in the world and in the psyche, to advance the human quest to transcendence. The archive is for those scientists who are asking how their research can contribute to the spiritual aspirations that touch on our highest potential. We are constructing a bridge between mysticism or spirituality and psychological science. We both hope that we can in this way contribute something of value.

Books

Mind, Brain and Human Potential: Quest for an Understanding of Self, 1991

Approaches to Consciousness: The Marriage of Science and Mysticism, 2004

David Lorimer, M.A.

A Quest for Wisdom

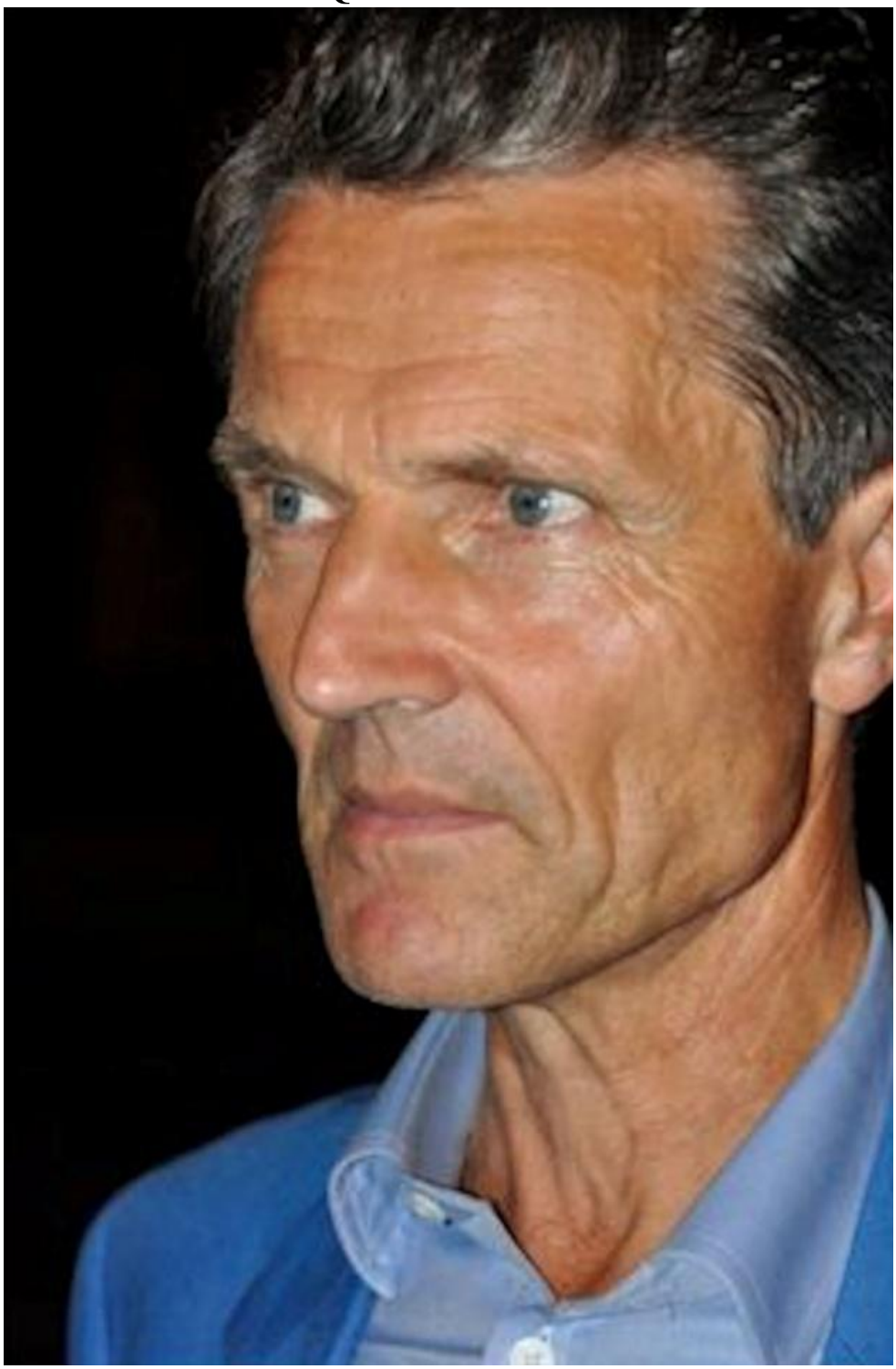

Photo by Bernard F. Stehle

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What historical thinkers influenced David Lorimer's understanding of wisdom? Why?

How do the Gaileo Report and other reports advance the non-materialist paradigm and understanding of consciousness?

What's the "replicability crisis?"

How does Lorimer encourage young people to think about their values?

I was born May 20, 1952, in St. Andrews, the home of golf in Scotland. I consider myself a Scotsman although, technically, I'm only half Scottish. I have an English grandmother and my other grandmother was Danish. I'm the first of four siblings. I'm on the cusp of Taurus and Gemini. *Do you identify with one more than the other?* I'm probably a mixture, which is appropriate and I have Gemini rising. I am ENFJ, with a high score on the N.

Living in France, growing up in England and Scotland, do you find that when you are teaching you approach it differently? I used to teach French and am very happy living in France. I feel quite at home, especially this area which is associated with the Albigensian Crusade and the Cathars. *I imagine that while Americans rush and eat in the car and go through fast food places, the French take two hours for a picnic lunch in the countryside and relish their food, wine, friends, and family. Is it still true that there is more enjoyment of life, taking time to savor it?* I would say so because most places still close for lunch, not the main supermarkets, but, for instance, the chain called BricoMarché closes for lunch. The little village shop we have here opens at 8:30 and closes at 12:30, opens again at 4:30 and then stays open until 7. It's a slightly different structure to the day.

The best-selling book French Women Don't Get Fat *describes how the French eat wonderful sauces and butter but have lower cholesterol and better health outcomes. Is it because they're less stressed?* I think that's definitely true. I always find that when I come back here from London that I immediately go into a slower mode. We walk our dog every morning and swim in the river and the lake in the summer. I'm a great fan of slow food

and all these sorts of movements pioneered by the Italians. I think that by taking it slower, you often do a better job.

Right, and you enjoy life more without stress hormones, cortisol reactions generated when you're in a hurry. In Paris and the big cities, they are just as stressed, but I think rural France still has a good pace of life. There are little markets and people pass the time of day with each other. *They are probably not as irritated with one another.* That is a function of the amount of stress that people are under. You do see people that are in a hurry: The French tend to be breaking the speed limit most of the time. It's just come down from 90 to 80 mph.

*Like Jim Carpenter,** y*ou have a very interesting mother in terms of childhood influences on your thinking. She had precognitive dreams and clairvoyant insights.* She had this intuitive psychic sense where she would know some things precognitively. She had some OBEs and an NDE. She would have an inner prompter who, if she asked a question, she would often get the answer to the question, often very practical such as, "I lost my keys, where are they?" *She would hear a voice in her head?* Yes, a sort of prompt. Obviously, that opened me up to the reality of this because, in a number of cases, there was a veridical element to the perception. For example, my father was very late coming back from a lunch when you couldn't phone up and keep in touch. We tried as an experiment to see whether she could pick up his car and we picked him up on the map about two miles away. If this was correct, he should be turning into the drive in about 20 seconds. As I went out, I saw his car turning into the drive.

Your mother had a dream about a job she would get and she saw that scene when she pulled in for the interview (I had a similar experience.) Your father was a skeptic. What was his reaction to her insights? I don't think he ever commented but he just wasn't that type. *Did you have any of the experiences like your mother with precognition or getting guidance from a seemingly higher source?* Really, no, I haven't had much by way of any exceptional experience.

` *Were they members of the Church of England?* Yes, we were Episcopalian, which was effectively the Church of England in Scotland. We went pretty irregularly but my mother had periods where she went quite often. We'd always go for Christmas and Easter. *At one point you considered being an Anglican priest, but you were more drawn to Swedenborg.* Yes, I thought about it and then I spent a weekend at a

theological college in Oxford and that pretty much put me off. *There is a lot of controversy in theology about who said what, when and how changes occur in translation.* We know from Biblical criticism that the Gospels have been altered, redacted, edited, and passages have been put in and others taken out according to the theology of translator and interpreter. That the Gospels could be the word of God in the sense that evangelicals insist is untenable from a scholarly point of view. Raymond Moody told me about one of his evangelical patients who had an NDE. When she came back to life, she said, "I learned that God isn't interested in theology. God is interested in what is in your heart."

W*hat interested you about Swedenborg, who died in 1772?* When I was at St. Andrews, I read French literature and among the people I read was Baudelaire, the 19th century French poet. One of his poems is called "Correspondences." I looked in the notes because I was studying the poem, which mentioned that Swedenborg influenced Baudelaire, so I got out a biography of him. One evening I stayed in and was absolutely riveted. I thought here is a man who was both a mystic and a scientist. With a very clear mathematical, engineering, and scientific mind, he writes as if he is giving a case report about what he perceived in the other dimensions in the spiritual world. I was very struck by that because it was all very matter of fact. That night I realized the sort of experiences my mother had were written about by Swedenborg with considerable intellectual authority.

Did he advocate a spiritual practice? Not that I can think of. But then he led a very productive life and was known to be a very kind, considerate person. He managed to operate in a number of different worlds. As he was writing these books, he was sitting in the Upper House of the Swedish parliament and managing engineering projects until he retired from that work.

Your interest in Carl Jung is similar, as both were very intellectual and visionary. Yes, the first thing I read by Jung was in the '70s. When I left my job in the bank, I took four boxes of books to the Continent and spent a year reading all of them. Jung's *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* was one of them. Then, at a slightly later stage, my mentor Norman Cockburn left me Jung's collected works. *I was really moved by his fascinating* Memories, Dreams, and Reflections. That was one of his last books and his most personal book. There is huge insight to be gained from that book. *I think he encapsulates why we're here—to become individuated, to become whole, to*

become conscious of the unconscious. Yes, I agree. *Do you write down your dreams or do dream analysis as Jung suggested?* It comes up from time to time. There is no doubt that if you work with your dreams then your dreams will work with you. *That is so true as it's the most direct way to access the unconscious.*

You were also interested in someone I've never heard of, a Bulgarian teacher for whom you learned Bulgarian—Peter Deunov. He has a spiritual name—Beinsa Douno. I came across him in 1985 because I bought a book by Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov, who was his disciple sent to teach in France—a book on cosmic moral laws. I ordered everything that Aivanhov had ever written. As I started reading it, I came across Peter Deunov and realized the most valuable source of his teaching came from him. There was very little available in English at that time so I bought a lot of books in French.

I came across an old Bulgarian in Paris named Anna Bertoli who published a periodical for 30 years. I ordered all of those, about a foot worth of material, and read all of that in French. Then, I met a Bulgarian in the local village where I lived. I took lessons from her for 18 months twice a week to learn the language. I went to Bulgaria in 1989 just before the fall of communism and the wall. It was quite a different place to what it is now. It looked very ramshackle, very old cars, and people living in fear in a police state. My friend had to report to the police every two days to confirm that we were still up in the mountains.

What was Deunov's message? You can encapsulate it in five principles: love, wisdom, truth, justice, and goodness with five symbols that correspond symbolically to the pentagram. They are expressed through his songs because he was a musician and also through his movements which are called *paneurhythmy*, a series of symbolic movements where you dance expressions of those principles. *Is it like Qigong?* No, it's done to music. The movements are straight lines representing the masculine and curves representing the feminine. You get what he calls "electric" or masculine movements or "magnetic" or feminine movements which are much softer and smoother. A combination of those gives you a very good physical condition. I do a series called The 22 Exercises every morning, balancing the masculine and feminine, the heart and the head, and balancing the feet in relationship to the earth with the head in relation to the invisible world.

What are the most difficult or challenging times in your life and how did you cope? I think it's around this whole spiritual path where I had all my biggest challenges. My parents interpreted my involvement with Deunov as a sect. They were concerned that I had been hypnotized by this and that I might give away family money to the sect. That had indeed been the case with many people and I made it very clear that I wasn't going to do that but they didn't trust me. I was partially disinherited on that basis. But I felt so strongly within myself that what I was doing was right and that I had to choose the spirit and spiritual commitment over the interest of the family, which is very difficult for the family to understand because most people put family absolutely first. I'm sad it had to create this sort of division, but it was a matter of principle at the time.

I'm surprised your mother wasn't more understanding because she could intuitively know that it was something you would handle well. They had quite a controlling attitude. They used to say, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." If you went out of line, then you could expect to be punished. So, this was a form of punishment as I see it.

What about other challenges? Nothing of that order because I've had a really beautiful and wonderful life in so many ways. I've been very blessed. *Do you have children, because sometimes they can be challenging?* I have two children. I have a daughter of 23 and a son of 20 in Scotland. They are very different and I spoke to them for quite a while last night.

Was it difficult deciding to switch from being a banker to a language and philosophy teacher? No, the kind of job I had in banking was regarded as the most desirable thing you could do by conventional people. I was in a top merchant bank and that is exactly the kind of thing my father would have liked me to do, but it just wasn't right for me. I asked myself when I was 22, do I want to be an ex-banker when I'm 70? My answer was no, so I've carved a different life for myself.

I did a post-graduate certificate of education at Cambridge. Then, I taught for eight years after that at Winchester College, which is one of the oldest secondary schools in the country, founded in 1382. *Does that private versus government school system still exclude working-class students who probably aren't going to go to a private school and then do well on A-levels to be able to go to university?* Something like a third of pupils at Winchester are helped by the school in some way. There are full

scholarships and also a lot of bursaries. They are very aware of trying to open up opportunity for people.

Let's talk about your work in organizations. You are the program director of the Scientific & Medical Network, an international group, but I think of it as being British. I've been associated with the Network for nearly 33 years, a huge part of my life.[38] Part of that is editing the journal which used to be called *Network Review* and now is called *Paradigm Explorer*. The Network is based in Britain, but it has members around the world. Our main conferences are the "Mystics and Scientists" conference, which has been going since 1978, and "Beyond the Brain" conference, going since 1995.

The original Network was set up because it still is very unfashionable and perhaps even dangerous to hold a non-material worldview. It was established with the intention of providing scientists, doctors, engineers, psychologists, and philosophers with a safe space where they could talk about what really mattered to them while not compromising themselves with their colleagues. That is still the case. One of the very useful functions of the Network is that you can have significant conversations with open-minded people who will give you critical feedback if they feel what you say can be questioned in some way.

At the moment, there are 850 members. There have been over 2,000 in the past but most membership organizations have shrunk in the past 10 or 15 years with the changing of generations and the advent of the internet where so much information is available free of charge. *What are examples of topics or themes in* Paradigm Explorer*?* We have a small editorial board. Things go out for review and quite a lot is turned down.

Quite a lot of the last issue was devoted to the Galileo Commission. *I've read a summary of the report. Tell us about the impetus to put the report together.* The report is very consistent with the original aim of the Network, which was that science could be pursued on the basis of spiritual non-material assumptions. In other words, science is not necessarily tied to a materialistic worldview and we can envisage a science which would have a different basis. The aim was to formulate a report which would point the way forward to a more expanded science and make the point that materialism is, in fact, a philosophy or a presupposition. It is not a scientific finding. It is very important to realize that science is actually underpinned by philosophy in terms of assumptions. It is not a standard thing for

scientists to be exposed to philosophy of science where you would learn about this. The full and summary reports are available at www.galileocommission.org.

I majored in history at UC Berkeley where we talked a lot about methodology and understanding that our points of view were biased, so I'm surprised that science doesn't do that kind of reflection on subjectivity. The seminal book in the field is *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* by Edwin A. Burtt, published in 1925. As far as I know, until then, nobody had articulated these assumptions that underpin science. He was ignored for very many years but this work was taken up again by Willis Harman at the Institute of Noetic Sciences in the 1990s as he looked at re-examining these metaphysical foundations of science.

We've continued this work, along with the emerging manifesto for a post-materialist science, working with the Academy for the Post-Materialist Sciences and www.OpenSciences.org. We're trying to bring together a critical mass of academics and scientists who challenge the assumption that the brain is entirely responsible for producing consciousness. We need a wider view because the implications of materialism for human meaning, mental health, and the planet are disastrous.

I was surprised that author Harald Walach agreed that there isn't good scientific psi research in terms of replicability. I asked Dean Radin* about this and he replied that there is no social science experiment where it's completely replicable because you are dealing with people.* There is a whole section of the report on the crisis of replication. Radin said that often he would tweak the experiment slightly so that what was being tested was slightly different. I think the strength of the data can be seen in meta-analysis more than in strict replication. Maybe (and I did ask Walach about this) we're dealing with a non-local phenomenon which is not subject to replicability in quite the same way.

In addition, we're also dealing with the experimenter effect. We know that people who do identical experiments but have different outlooks or attitudes are likely to get different results. *Marilyn Schlitz* is probably the most famous one.* Exactly, she and Richard Wiseman didn't get the same results. The Catch-22 is that the skeptics don't recognize the experimenter effect because they believe in objectivity. They are the objective ones, of course, and people who get other results are obviously interfering in some

way. *Yes, with their intention.* Which is inconsistent, of course, since you can't have it both ways.

What kind of response have you gotten from The Galileo Report? We've had a terrific response from people in the field. We're in the process of finalizing the full report with lots of academic references and detailed, solid argument. Academically, that will be the important thing because what you've seen is the summary of the argument without the detailed argumentation. I think the result is very rigorous and, hopefully, we can get people to pay some attention to it rather than being ignored and dismissed which is what has happened to a lot of these initiatives.

Regarding compilations of psi research, I think of Dean Radin and Claude Swanson who have put together study after study after study. Would you add anyone to that list of compilers of psi research?* An article by Etzel Cardeña (Lund University in Sweden) in the *American Psychological Association Journal* in 2018 looked at the scientific evidence for psi.[39] For him to get it published in that kind of journal was really a step forward.

How would you define consciousness? It depends on the frame and culture in which you are talking. "Consciousness is the ground of being" is really Being with a capital B. That is the transcendent ground of existence, which is one category. What's argued in the Galileo Report is there are different ways of expressing that consciousness needs to be understood as fundamental, unlike our current science that regards matter as the only principle required in order to explain everything, including consciousness. That's the real shift that we need.

One direction would be to go back to a refined form of idealism. Some people are moving in the direction of panpsychism where consciousness, or at least sentience, "goes all the way down." Another slightly different approach would be dual-aspect monism as espoused by Harald Walach in the Galileo Report. People are trying to find different ways forward to present a coherent picture of the relationship between mind and brain and consciousness and matter.

What is the dualist approach? It's the Cartesian approach, which maintains mind and matter are distinct and different. Philosophers have been arguing for 200 or 300 years about how these incompatible principles can actually relate to each other. The way I see this is, in any world you can conceive of, you need consciousness and form. You can't have a form nor expression of life unless there is both consciousness and the form in which

that is expressed. For instance, in the spiritual world, this might be a body of light, whereas in the physical world we have a physical carbon-based body. But that doesn't stop us from having bodies in these other dimensions that we are not aware of.

Do you think that we have a physical body and other dimensional forms? I think we do, but these are not generally apparent. Look at the phenomenon of apparitions where people can appear to others and be seen in a place where their physical body is not present. The form that they appear in is so like the physical that it's often mistaken for it. I talk about this in a chapter of my book *Survival* with a number of case histories. I also look at OBEs. There are very few but significant reciprocal cases where somebody experiences being out of the body and is seen by a person who thinks they are an apparition. In other words, the two sides reinforce each other or are consistent.

Wearing another hat, you founded Character Scotland with the aim of inspiring purpose and values, in a program where over 300,000 students have participated. Why did you start it and what is the nexus of the program? As a teacher, I've always been interested in the development of young people so they could get a sense of purpose and meaning and do something worthwhile with their lives. Professionally, you tend to get sucked into the conventional route, but in order to live the most fulfilling life, you have to find your calling. My intent with this program is to give children a self-reflective process which is education in the true sense of the word, to draw something out from them they already know intuitively. We enable them to go through a process so that they can discover it explicitly.

The sort of feedback we get is, "I learned a huge amount more about myself. I managed to define my goals and aspirations. I know where I'm going." This is very valuable for the age group between 10 and 15—the age group that we work with—particularly ages 12 to 13 where people are balancing standing out and fitting in. We all want to stand out in our individuality but we all want to fit in with other people.

What is an example of a question that you ask or an exercise that you give the young people? The template is divided into three sections. We have the template online which can be downloaded by the children. The first part is self-knowledge and self-awareness. They have to look at some qualities and pick two choices out of seven. Which of those is their strong point and what do they need to work on? We don't say, "What is your weak point?"

The way that they describe that is very honest. The second page has to do with inspiration. They have to find an inspirational figure and write about her or him and research and work out how that person became inspiring. The third part is about aspiration: "What kind of person do you want to become? What do you want to achieve in your life? What is your vision for a better world? What are you personally going to do about it in the next few weeks?" So I put them on the spot.

Anyone can download the template.[40] What we call this particular program is Global Citizens in the Making. If you go into the website under "Pupils," you will see the template available for download. That is based on the fact that we need young people to have an international outlook to help them move in that direction. We are going to need an unprecedented degree of collaboration and cooperation as the world moves forward if we are going to respond to the challenges we set for ourselves. *A lot of people feel that children need values but they are afraid to talk about it in schools because some think it's religious indoctrination.* That's right, which is why we focus not just on values, but also on character.

We are called Character Education Scotland. More recently, the Jubilee Centre in Birmingham University has managed to get people to start using the term "virtue" again, which is very interesting. The whole impulse is based on Aristotelian virtue ethics which is very fruitful because, in a secular context, more people are likely to listen to Aristotle than religions.

In the US, adolescents are increasingly anxious and depressed; girls especially have high rates of anxiety and it's increasing. Is it an issue in the countries you know as well? It certainly is in the UK and the situation is worse for girls. A recent study suggested that those who spend more than three hours a day online are more likely to have these problems. *Do you think it's because they compare themselves with others and think "I didn't get enough likes or people criticize my photograph on Instagram or I didn't get invited to this group event"?* Yes and I think it also puts pressure on you if you are only allowed to put up the good things in your life. Everybody is meant to be having a great time all the time. Life isn't like that. *It means if I'm not having a great time like all my peers, there must be something wrong with me.*

I review a lot of books in our journal, including a review of a book on happiness. I entitled it, "I am liked. Therefore, I am," a play on Descartes' "I think. Therefore, I am." People's sense of self and self-esteem is

dependent upon the number of likes they get from other people. This is obviously a maturity issue between being outer-directed and inner-directed. To the extent that you are outer-directed, your happiness depends more on the views of other people. But if you are inner-directed, then that can come from within. *Psychologists use the term "internal locus of control" or "external locus of control." People with the latter are more anxious because they are dependent on others.* Exactly.

You were President of the Wrekin Trust which has to do with education about adult spirituality. It was founded by Sir George Trevelyan and was inspirational in the '70s and '80s when it had a huge number of courses. They put on weekend courses, some longer residential ones, and some large conferences like "Mystics & Scientists." They had a big healing conference, which was a tremendous gathering of the clans at that stage. About 10,000 people a year would go through their courses when it was at its peak. I was Chairman of Trustees for a long time and eventually was President. We closed it down two years ago because we ran out of money but it achieved a huge amount in over 40 years of work.

What universities do you know that offer programs in Consciousness Studies or parapsychology? Not so many. There is still activity at Edinburgh which used to have the Koestler Chair. I say "used to" because the university demoted it. As far as I know, there is no chair at the moment, there is just a senior lecturer. They wanted the Psychology Department to be a five-star department and they regarded the association with the Koestler Chair as a handicap. Universities actively went out of their way to avoid getting the Chair when it was made available because they didn't want to be tainted with parapsychology. Northampton has quite a lot of research going on. I'm a tutor on a Master's in transpersonal psychology and spirituality which has recently renewed its affiliation with Liverpool John Moores University, led by Les Lancaster.*

You were one of the founders of the International Futures Forum and you edited Omnipedia: Thinking for Tomorrow. *Omnipedia* is no longer published. The International Futures Forum is very interesting because its premise is to learn how we make decisions in a world we can't completely understand or control. It's very forward-thinking, combining intuitive approaches with rational experiential learning with analysis. It's very creative. *Are there other vanguard organizations to include?* The Swedenborg Society, where I was president for three years. I was also

involved in the International Association of Near-death Studies in the UK. I edited the journal in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s.

In God and the Afterlife *by Jeffrey Long, M.D., in Louisiana, he said that some people have NDEs where it’s like they’re tormented in hell. I always pictured NDEs as this blissful time, greeted by beings of light and your loved ones, so it’s interesting to me that some people don’t have that kind of joyful experience.* Yes, it seems a small minority of people have these negative experiences. There aren’t as many documented as the more blissful variety. *People don’t want to talk about it?* That could be, but I think it’s also phenomenological.

In my view, some negative cases are brought on by hanging onto the body instead of surrendering and letting go. If you hang on, like people tend to do in comas, you can precipitate a negative experience. *What else can we learn from people who have NDEs?* My second book, which is reprinted as *Resonant Mind,* was all about what I call the “ethic of interconnectedness.” We can learn from the NDEs that the underlying purpose of life is growth, particularly growth in love and wisdom. That is totally consistent with the Deunov philosophy.

Where do you find people to interview who have had NDEs or OBEs? The way that we did it in the ‘80s when this was all starting up is that we would write an article in a newspaper, go on a radio or TV program, and at the end of the program, we’d invite people to write in. IANDS got hundreds of letters used as the basis for understanding the phenomenology of the NDE. Then, at a later stage, it evolved. Dutch cardiologist Pim van Lommel, for instance, did a prospective study where he interviewed everybody from a number of hospitals who had a cardiac arrest. He was able to see more accurately what proportion of people remembered an NDE —about 16%. Most all the studies fall within the 10 to 20% bracket of incidence. What people always say is that NDEs are orders of magnitude more real than a dream, so it’s a mistake to think it’s a dream or hallucination.

Your most recent book was Survival? Death as a Transition*, 2017.* The original of *Survival* came out in 1984. It was a reprint effectively, with a new introduction. The same for *Resonant Mind* which was titled *Whole in One* which came out in 1990. *What was the theme of* Resonant Mind*?* The subtitle of the original book was *The Near-death Experience and the Ethic of Interconnectedness*. I coined the term “empathetic resonance” to describe

the capacity we have to enter into and feel what it's like to be someone else. This happens cosmically in the mystical experience when you expand to your maximum capacity. Also, it happens in the deep life-review in an NDE where instead of re-experiencing the event from your own viewpoint, you re-experience it from every viewpoint, every angle the event had.

The way I formulated it is the metaphysics of interconnectedness, oneness, and unity implies an ethic of interconnectedness that is basically the Golden Rule: that we should treat other people as we want to be treated. In other words, we should behave with love and wisdom. Deunov said that when we return to the invisible world, we will be examined on how we applied the law of love. If one knew that from an early age, one might try to live life in a particular way.

I published four edited books and a number of compilations from my education project. *Spirit of Science* is based on the Mystics & Scientists conferences*; Thinking Beyond the Brain* is based on the Beyond the Brain series*; Science, Consciousness and Ultimate Reality* is based on a Templeton-funded project which we did with the same name; and *A New Renaissance* explored this idea that we are in the process of a New Renaissance with a return to spiritual sources.

Yet the world seems like it's going to hell in a handbasket climate-wise, with growing inequality, increasing autocrats, etc. Yes, there is a process of globalization, violence, excess, environmental damage, but at the same time, there are a lot of people working on renewable solutions. There are activist groups. *Blessed Unrest* by Paul Hawken concluded that if you look at the large picture as reported in the media, then it's desperate, but if you focus on what is happening with thousands of NGOs all over the world, there is a lot of hope. There are grounds for despair and grounds for hope but I feel, ethically, one has to come down on the "we can do something about it" side.

As a footnote, are the French yellow vest protesters angry about not having affordable wages or enough social support? I think that has mutated. It started as a protest against the fuel tax which President Emmanuel Macron was going to bring in as part of his green agenda. I think the fundamental issue in France is the disconnect between the elite and the ordinary people. The disconnect is particularly acute with Macron. Although, having said that, he has been getting out and about in the country attending meetings and listening to people. A big consultation is going on at

the moment. Everybody is being able to have their say, attend meetings, write in with suggestions, and so on.

What has happened with the *gilets jaunes* is it's become a generalized social protest and the focus of discontent for ordinary people who feel that they have been left behind. If you look across the countries, a major factor is, in fact, the 2008 financial crisis, where very few if any bankers were sent to jail. They should have been. *They were in Iceland.* Many in Goldman Sachs are still running America, although many of them should be behind bars. People feel that they had to suffer 10 years of austerity because of some crisis that had nothing to do with them. The same elite people are still running the system but there is a spirit of revolution in France which is very strong, much more so than in many other countries.

There is a sense of hope which is misused. When I was writing *The Protein Crunch*, I noticed that after a litany of despair the final chapter of ecological books, whether about rivers or population or the seas, always said there is hope if we do x, y, and z. I call this "conditional hope," but if we continue not doing these things and just hoping, then that doesn't produce any result. Paradoxically, we know what we need to do, but politically and economically, it's very difficult to do it. *What gives me hope is the recent strikes by students led by Greta Thunberg in Sweden spreading to various countries. My next book is about those girls.*

What do you suggest as solutions in The Protein Crunch*?* The fundamental thesis of *The Protein Crunch* is the huge increase in the middle class in China and India has taken people off the poverty line. As they want to eat more meat and fish, their impact on the planet is going to go up. Specifically, in terms of food, my co-author Jason Drew has really put his ideas into practice. He has a huge multi-national company called Agri-Protein, which produces animal feed through fly larvae and recycling food garbage delivered to the factories where it's consumed by the flies. The larvae are harvested and made into animal food. That's a very practical step and is proving phenomenally successful in terms of many millions of pounds raised and the number of factories that have been created worldwide.

Vandana Shiva in India and other environmentalists who are concerned about food production say that we need to rely on small organic farmers because the big industrials don't feed that many people and they hurt the soil. That was the conclusion reached by a five-year-old report

from the Food and Agriculture Organization.[41] The buzz phrase is "sustainable intensification." If we continue with industrialization and mechanization, then the problems created by that model will continue to intensify. We have to shift our course.

Did you write Radical Prince *about Prince Charles because of his environmental interests?* I realized that his views, particularly on agriculture, medicine, and science, came from a spiritual perspective. He is always talking about the importance of a sense of the sacred and how we've lost that. The intent behind the book was to explain the philosophy and ideas that inform his work. What I show is that the Prince has a coherent worldview which is expressed in his work.

Some people turn to quantum mechanics to explain psi phenomena. Do you think that is a useful tool? Yes, the general argument is that if quantum entanglement and non-locality is a phenomenon on the quantum level, there might be a parallel at the macroscopic level, i.e., the human level, with a parallel explanation. One criticism of this is that it doesn't involve sending a signal, but there was no signal in quantum entanglement. At the same time, I think the signal metaphor is wrong. It was the old one used 100 years ago with the invention of the radio, and lots of experiments are set up for a sender and receiver. That is just a metaphor because I think what's happening is there is a sharing of experience at some kind of level so there is an overlap of the minds that Rupert Sheldrake calls "resonance." [*See our video interview.*[42]] It's also very useful in the sense that quantum mechanics and quantum entanglement is so well established scientifically that it does provide a thought structure that can be transferred from one area to another and make it more plausible.

What is your next book or research project? I'm envisaging another phase to the Galileo Commission and I'm looking at doing an Inspiring Purpose poster for students with regenerating nature as a theme. The other thing I'm keen to do is to collate my book reviews onto a database so that they become available to people and possibly publish a series of volumes of book reviews in particular areas because I review about 250 books a year at various levels of detail. I've started categorizing my book reviews. I'm already up to 500 with only about a third of the journals covered so far.

What do you do for fun in the midst of all this work? I walk every day with my dog. When I was in Scotland I used to play golf once a week. One of my sadnesses living in France is I only play golf three or four times a

year now. When I'm in Scotland, I try and play with my son because he is a very keen golfer. I listen to music; I listen to Bach nearly every day because it structures my consciousness in a very beautiful way, particularly, the great Preludes and Fugues.

Have we left anything out that people should know about what is happening with psi research or organizations? I think the interesting question is the extent to which there is a real groundswell shift because, on the one hand, AI and mechanization of intelligence and the idea of technotopia is gaining ground. On the other hand, there is an intensification of formulation of what Jennifer Gidley calls a human-centered future in her book *The Future: A Very Short Introduction.* Instead of a technotopic future, probably the future is going to be somewhat in between. But of course, the technotopic future is based on a mechanistic understanding of consciousness and the brain which is very left hemisphere.

The reason I say that is because of my friend Iain McGilchrist, the author of the *Master and His Emissary,* a magisterial book on left and right hemisphere thinking and its cultural implications. We live in a left hemisphere society which values the outer, the material, the quantitative, the controllable, the bureaucratic, the legal areas, and we're starved on the spiritual side. But again, there is a huge resurgence of spirituality and mysticism. So, it's all happening at the same time.

It's interesting to see which synthesis will come out of this dialectical process. Yes, well maybe more than one because we tend to look for a simple outcome but the world is complex so the process is likely to be complex and intertwined. I think our thinking on economics and politics is inadequate to the complexity of life and the importance of the long-term. Both economics and politics are geared to the short-term. That's not what we need, especially now.

Books

The Circle of the Sacred Dance: Peter Deunov's Paneurythmy, 1991
The Spirit of Science: From Experiment to Experience, 1999
Thinking Beyond the Brain: A Wider Science of Consciousness, 2001
Science, Consciousness and Ultimate Reality, 2004
Radical Prince: The Practical Vision of the Prince of Wales, 2003
Resonant Mind: The Near-death Experience and the Ethic of Interconnectedness, 1990, 2017

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Survival? Body, Mind, Death in Light of the Psychic Experience, 1984, 2017

Robert Mays and Suzanne Mays

What We Learn from Near-Death Experiences

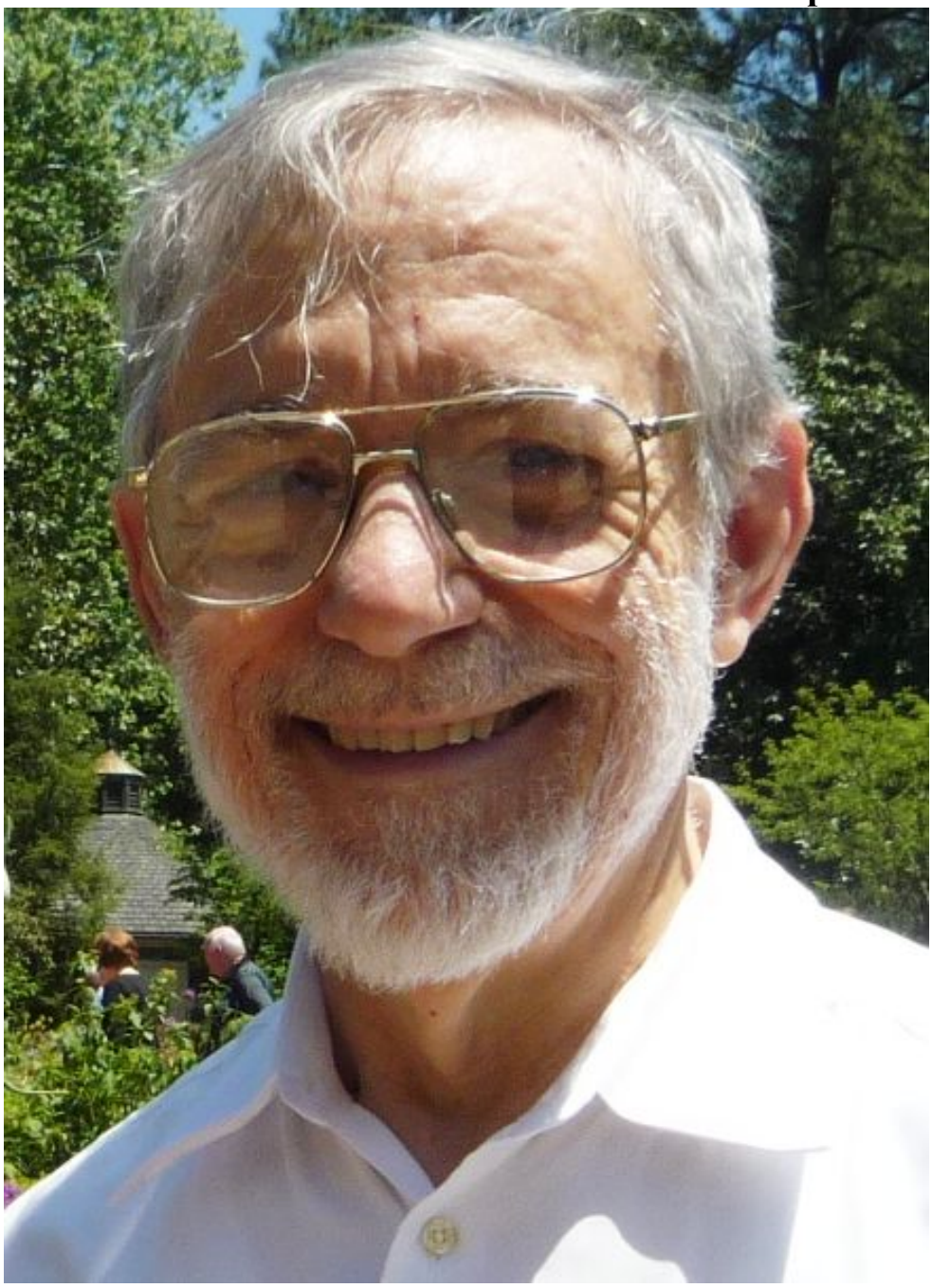


Photo by Cherylee Black

Photo by Robert Mays

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What evidence do they present that minds can be aware while brain dead during an NDE?

Robert and Suzanne Mays don't think physics can explain psi phenomenon like NDEs. Why not?

They fault psi researchers for not having a theory. Theirs is the Mind Entity and Transcendent Realm hypothesis. Explain.

What do NDEs tell us about time, free will, and the future?

Robert: I was born in August 1946 in Westbury, New York, a Leo with its characteristics of leadership and courage. I'm an INTJ and the second of five children. I was raised in a pretty conventional family. My father was in the Foreign Service and we lived in Europe for a number of years, which gave me a certain perspective. We left for Europe in 1957 and I came back in 1963 to attend MIT and had to face culture shock because the US was going full-steam ahead into materialism. I saw through the emptiness of physical material science and physicalism and felt there is something else, which led me to Zen.

Suzanne: I was born in Rochester, New York. October 1947, a Libra, which means balance. I'm the first of three children, an INFJ, and we have two children. I have two younger brothers and my parents divorced by the time I was 12. They both worked full-time so most of my childhood was taking care of my two brothers. We were a poor family and couldn't afford music, which was my earliest love. I wanted so badly to play an instrument but I didn't have any music education as a child. It didn't begin until after Robert and I married in 1972 and I enrolled in some courses at the university and took up the violin.

When we moved to North Carolina I first heard the lyre. I fell in love with it instantly and knew that was my instrument. I learned it on my own because it's not a well-known instrument and there aren't any teachers around. I would go to the yearly conferences and pick up techniques and then work on it at home. I enrolled in a certification called Music for Healing and Transition Program (MHTP) and was able to work at a hospital in the Intensive Care Unit and Burn Center for about 10 years on a weekly basis.

Libras have to do with balance so I could describe my spiritual quest as this way of finding the middle path. My father grew up in the Roman Catholic Church, while my mother was from a Protestant tradition and converted to Roman Catholicism. When they divorced, my mother was excommunicated from the Church. She eventually found her way to the Zen Center in Rochester led by Roshi Philip Kapleau. So, in my journey, I went from the Western Christian background, into the fanatical conservative literalism of Jehovah's Witnesses as a teenager due to my grandmothers' influence. I had an existential crisis when I was 16 where I saw my face in a mirror and the question came out of nowhere, "Who am I?" My world turned upside down and what I thought I could devote myself to—as a missionary for Jehovah's Witnesses—I immediately walked away from.

Right after that, I earned a two-year degree and I took up the practice of Zen Buddhism. Robert and I met at the Zen Center and were married there. But after about five years, I became disillusioned with Zen as well, because it was a severe spiritual discipline and it didn't provide a practical application of the spiritual wisdom that someone might access through enlightenment. I changed from just wanting enlightenment for spiritual liberation to immersing myself in Western esotericism which brought me to the Rosicrucian path of Spiritual Science known as anthroposophy. That's been my path for 43 years now. *But isn't Steiner different from the Rosicrucians?* **S:** Steiner's anthroposophy is in the Rosicrucian spiritual stream. *Steiner was influenced by idealism and Theosophy, etc. and developed Waldorf schools?* Correct.

How did you two get interested in NDEs and what happens after this life? **R:** We read Raymond Moody's *Life After Life* and also George Ritchie's book describing his NDE, *Return from Tomorrow,* in the middle to late 1970s. At the same time, we were studying esoteric traditions, particularly Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, and we found that near-death accounts fit perfectly with esoteric knowledge. While we were reading Steiner's lecture series *At the Gates of Spiritual Science,* we were also reading George Ritchie's NDE account, which seemed like a complete verification of what Rudolf Steiner was saying about what happens when we die, and vice versa.

I'm interested in the background of visionary scientists because it takes a lot of courage to do this kind of work. **R:** I think I always believed in God; our family went to church but was not terribly religious. As a

student at MIT, I had this idealistic notion about science; that was my focus and my love and still is, but I realized my idealism was totally off base. There was no real insight into reality through science and, subsequently, I have confirmed that. That led me to a real depression and I started looking at other philosophies. I dropped out after my sophomore year and took two years off, but then returned and graduated from MIT with a degree in chemistry in 1968.

In my last year at MIT, I studied Eastern Religions with Huston Smith and began practicing Zen Buddhist meditation at the Zen Center in Rochester. Zen practice was quite opening in terms of feeling comfortable with the world in which there is karma, reincarnation, and a spiritual aspect to everything. Basically, Suzanne and I have stayed under the radar until we really started our research in 2005 and published our first research paper in 2008. Then we had to come out, so to speak.

Do you mean that science didn't explain reality because it was focused on the material and didn't include consciousness? **R:** Looking at where science is leading I saw that it was going further and further into the operations of smaller and smaller parts of reality, not leading to some broad understanding. In chemistry particularly, this problem was obvious. Because of the nature of matter, there is no absolute predictability about anything at the molecular level, so there were always perturbations and adjustments that physical chemists made.

I'm reading The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality *by the Dalai Lama where he talks about consciousness from the Buddhist perspective and how detailed, intricate, and in-depth the study is they've done of consciousness over thousands of years. He says you have to include the first-person experience because third-person pretense of objectivity doesn't work when you're studying consciousness.* **S:** That's right. Reality includes extremely hidden phenomena that can only be verified through first-person accounts. That person needs to be reliable and credible. **R:** The Tibetan Buddhist philosophy has this notion that you have primary, observable phenomena; then hidden phenomena that can be inferred from observable effects; and then you have extremely hidden phenomena. NDEs and most other spiritual experiences are extremely hidden phenomena that you can't really study except from first-person testimony.

How did you start researching people who'd had NDEs? **R:** In 1978 when we read Ritchie and Moody, we said, "Wow, it's solved. The whole spiritual aspect of human existence is here in these NDE phenomena." Through the 1980s and '90s, we helped to start a Waldorf school here in Chapel Hill and studied anthroposophy. Then my father got pancreatic cancer in 2004 and I wanted to find a book on NDEs and similar phenomena for him about the spiritual aspect of reality and couldn't find one, so we thought about writing our own book for people who are elderly or faced with death. We honed in on NDEs and got deeper and deeper, finding that a lot of work still needed to be done. That's how we arrived at our theoretical stance, which we thought was obvious. So we delved deep into the nature of NDEs as an archetypal phenomenon and what NDEs imply for consciousness, and we've kept going.

R: We have two hypotheses. One is the "Mind Entity" hypothesis, that the essence of a person is an individuated spiritual being, a soul, a psyche. The mind entity unites with a brain and body and then separates in an NDE and can operate independently of them. Of course, at death, the mind entity separates and continues on.

The other hypothesis is the "Transcendent Realm" hypothesis looking at NDEs from the perspective of what's it like in the higher realms and what's it's like to be out of body. We were influenced by the work of Jean-Pierre Jourdan who hypothesized that NDErs perceive in a totally different way, which implies there's an additional dimension to reality. Being out of the body puts one into a fifth dimension, which is all around us. But when we're in the physical body we don't perceive this extra dimension, so our consciousness is stuck in the three dimensions of space plus one of time. Yet there is a fifth dimension that people who have psychic abilities experience—they can get partially out-of-body or have an extended energetic field. All of these psychic abilities take part in the fifth dimension.

In addition, there are aspects of time. Life reviews in NDEs imply there is a record of all human interactions from the physical world—in what's called the Akashic record or Book of Life. Even further, about 60% of NDErs are told something like "You must go back; it's not your time. You have more to do with your life on Earth." These statements imply that there is a plan and purpose for one's life, things specifically to be learned, experienced and done. They imply that one's purpose was set before birth

and agreed to and that there are benevolent, guiding, transcendent beings present throughout one's life.

Where do you get your case studies? **R:** We have done some interviews with NDErs but mostly we've read the compilations of NDEs by Ken Ring, P.M.H. Atwater, Raymond Moody, Pim van Lommel, Michael Sabom, Arvin Gibson, Melvin Morse, etc., and also individual NDE accounts like George Ritchie, Howard Storm, Dannion Brinkley, Tom Sawyer, Betty Eadie, and so on. **S:** Also from the IANDS Annual Conference (International Association for Near-Death Studies) with panels with NDErs who tell their stories. So we get to hear first-hand from some NDErs and then some of these people go on to write their own books. (IANDS was started in 1981 by Raymond Moody, Bruce Greyson, Ken Ring, Michael Sabom, and John Audette.)

You're interested in veridical NDE perception. So how does one prove it? I know there's the classic George Ritchie account in Return from Tomorrow *where he astral traveled and you could see on a map where he went.* **R:** There are no "proofs" in science, but we can make a convincing case that verified perceptions occur in NDEs that are out of the NDEr's range of physical perception or occur when there is no brain activity, for example during cardiac arrest. Many of these veridical perceptions have been verified as accurate by a third party. We edited the English edition of *The Self Does Not Die* and wrote the foreword to it. In the book, the Dutch authors, Titus Rivas, Anny Dirven, and Rudolf Smit compiled over a hundred verified cases where an NDEr has veridical paranormal experiences. In about two-thirds of these cases, the NDEr could perceive something that they should not have been able to.

For example, in the Pam Reynolds case, she saw and heard certain things while under anesthesia during a hypothermic brain aneurysm operation and later observed when her heart was shocked twice before it restarted. Her perceptions were later verified by the doctors. This case has been argued about left and right, but when we have dozens of such verified cases occurring under all sorts of circumstances, it becomes clear that one can't attribute purely physical explanations for all of these cases, except that the consciousness—the mind entity—has separated from the body.

Skeptics say, "This can't happen. It's absurd," and often don't even read the studies. **R:** John Martin Fischer and Benjamin Mitchell-Yellin wrote *Near-death Experiences: Understanding Visions of the Afterlife*. They

cherry-picked seven of the cases that also appear in *The Self Does Not Die* and explained certain aspects about each case using physicalist explanations. But what about all the other cases? How would they explain an NDEr under cardiac arrest who reports seeing a 1985 quarter on the top of an 8-foot tall cabinet in his room, sitting in the dust, and the doctor finds it?

Or an NDEr who has a cardiac arrest in the ICU and floats up through the ceiling into the room above and describes it as "an odd room with beds with dummies in them and monitors in a circle in the center of the room"? He was describing the nurse CPR training room located directly above his ICU cubicle. These cases do not fit their limited physicalist explanations, so Fischer and Mitchell-Yellin would need to come up with ever more *ad hoc* explanations to cover such cases.

How does quantum physics fit in with what you call the fifth dimension? **R:** We think that quantum physics is the wrong approach because the physical, material aspects of reality derive from (or "supervene on") the transcendent reality. So the oddities of quantum physics—like particle entanglement and the "observer effect"—are really aspects of the physical world operating out of the transcendent fifth dimension. So rather than saying, "these physical phenomena appear to be 'non-local' or 'observer dependent,' therefore they explain consciousness," it would be much better to look at the archetypal phenomena of consciousness, like NDEs, to understand the nature of reality and of consciousness.

The fundamental nature of reality is transcendent. Yet even theorists supportive of NDE phenomena say consciousness is "non-local" and thus physically spread throughout the universe. They really don't consider what NDE phenomena actually imply. In fact, NDE phenomena strongly imply that consciousness is individuated in spiritual beings. This conclusion is also evidenced in the phenomena of deceased relatives and other spiritual beings in NDEs, in after-death communications, in reincarnation memories, and in mediumship. These phenomena all imply that human beings are individuated spiritual beings. NDErs say that human beings are eternal. Even God seems to manifest to some NDErs as an individuated being. Some NDErs report "merging" with these higher beings, but the NDErs still retain their individual identity and memory formation and return to the body as individuated human beings.

The idea of "non-local consciousness" is that one's consciousness is spread out across all of existence and can somehow communicate to a specific brain. In this "filter model" of consciousness, one's personal perceptions are generated by the brain and transmitted out to one's diffuse mind. The diffuse mind then transmits one's thoughts, imaginations, and plans back to the specific brain. To us, this model of non-local consciousness doesn't explain the NDE phenomena of individuated beings and is really just baloney.

Quantum mechanics doesn't contradict the idea of individuation because you have entangled photons, photon A and photon B, but there's some mechanism that allows B to influence A, even from a distance and instantaneously. **R:** Right and that is probably a property of the fifth dimension. Physics, in general, ought to look at not just four dimensions but at one more dimension and see how that works with these quantum phenomena. Actually, some physicists have done that. In the 1920s, Theodor Kaluza and Oskar Klein endeavored to explain physical phenomena like gravity and electromagnetism by giving a physical-mathematical interpretation of the unobservable fifth dimension. These developments were the precursor to present-day string theory. What is needed now is to incorporate into such theories the phenomenal reports by NDErs:

1. Of the nature of out-of-body perception of the physical realm which is described by terms like "360° spherical perception," "perception from everywhere," and "perception by zoom and displacement;"
2. Of the sense of hyperdimensional existence being "beyond space and time";
3. Of the phenomena of life reviews: precise hyperdimensional records of prior earth events in a person's life from the perspective of all of the participants in the event;
4. Of the phenomena of life *previews*, precognitive visions of future events which frequently turn out to be remarkably accurate.

The first step should probably be understanding how the mind entity interfaces and integrates with the physical body and how those processes restrict the person's experience of the world to the four-dimensional physical realm (3 space + 1 time dimension) and generally block out the

experience of the extra hyperdimension. We would expect to have psychic abilities and psychic phenomena manifest where the physical brain processes fail to block hyperdimensional processes.

It's also very important to look at time because we have life previews in NDEs and precognitive dreams. We're currently studying the prophetic visions that NDErs report. Also, in the life review particularly, there are specific personal events that will come years later and yet are precise in the details of the future events. In an NDE reported by Pim van Lommel, a man was shown future events throughout his life, wrote them all down and was able check them off as they occurred. In particular, he saw an image of his wife on her deathbed wearing a particular shawl. She was given that shawl the day before she died.

Ken Ring reported the NDE account of a man from England. When he was 10 years old, he was told two things in his NDE in 1941: "(1) You will be married at age 28, and (2) you will have two children and you will live in a house that looks like this." He indeed got married at age 28. The vision came to reality when he was 37. He looked up from his chair and recognized the vision from his NDE as it manifested in his living room, with his two kids playing on the floor. What he didn't understand when he was 10 was something on the wall at his side that turned out to be a forced-air heating duct that wasn't in use in 1941.

R: What do these phenomena tell us about present-day physics? They tell us that physics doesn't know anything of the hyperdimensional reality —physics really needs to be extended. If we have these detailed records in the transcendent realm, in the Akashic record or Book of Life, of past events in a person's life, there's nothing in physics that can explain them or explain being able to see pictures of the future that actually come to pass in precise detail 27 years later. Visions of future events don't happen just during NDEs; some NDErs have vivid precognitive and prophetic visions long after their NDE, during sleep and even while awake. *I've experienced those kinds of pictures of things that would happen. People I'd meet or a job that I would get like a snapshot would come into my consciousness.* **R:** Exactly.

Physicists know that time isn't linear, that time is flexible in a way. So having those kinds of understandings of the future fits in with time not being linear. **R:** What is causing those visions of future events is not physics. It's spiritual. It's transcendent. The nature of the transcendent realm is timeless

and spaceless because there are no limitations of space, and time is really kind of spatial. **S:** Time becomes space. **R:** Right. Actually, the best way to see that is in the life review where the events are laid out spatially one after the other and you can look at them all simultaneously or wherever you want to put your attention. A number of NDErs say that every event in their NDE seemed to happen all at once, simultaneously, and afterwards they have to sort out the individual events in a logical sequence. NDEs involve a different process. Different transcendent laws are involved. Physics works fine within the physical realm as long as you don't interject spiritual aspects.

Are free will and predestination contradictory? **R:** Free will operates within the physical realm so we can't absolutely predict the future because incarnated people make decisions as they go along. Lesley Lupo, author of *Remember, Every Breath is Precious,* was involved with a man when they were in their 20s. The plan they made before they were born and incarnated together was that they were both going to die young in an automobile accident. He wanted to marry her but she refused and decided not to go when he asked her, "Please come and visit me one last time." He died in a car accident, but because she decided not to marry him, her prebirth life plan had to get rearranged, which means other people's plans got rearranged, too. Decades later she had an NDE where this all became clear in her life review, that her spiritual guides had to readjust her plan. We're being educated when we experience a life review.

Michael Newton's books relate that we tend to incarnate as groups. You were maybe once my father and then you're my daughter. Do you know about past lives where you were together? **R:** People do plan to be together and actually when I first laid eyes on Suzanne, I knew that there was something special about her. **S:** We were married 48 years in May 2020. *As a footnote, what are the secrets of making a marriage work over time, besides having shared interests and beliefs?* **S:** Sense of humor, humility, and the willingness to serve the other even if it means a so-called sacrifice in one's own part because you're there to help the other. The most important is to be on a mutual spiritual path together, which really gives one the strength to stay together. **R:** Sense of humor and learning to be flexible. Actually, it isn't a sacrifice anyway because this is fun.

Do you ever get bored? **S:** Never. It gets better every day. It's just wonderful. I'm so grateful each day that we have together. We do

everything together. We have our meals together, we go for a walk together, and research together. **R:** Absolutely.

What have you found about visions of the future from people who are having NDEs? Is there hope for us or not? **S:** We're in urgent times. **R:** Some NDErs say that these are the "end times." A number of them are pointing to a major natural disaster that wipes out a large number of people and a large area. There also seems to be a theme about really serious political and civic strife and maybe even civil war in the US and serious terrorist attacks, much more serious than 9/11. **S:** We call it a "reset time."

R: All of this seems to be a warning. These events are not inevitable; they are a warning for us to change. They're not punishments but rather are the natural consequences of our actions or inactions. So these things will happen unless we change radically. The caldera in Yellowstone could blow and destroy most of North America and cause a global winter of at least six years, which means little or no crops and therefore starvation for most people.

Have some NDErs said that specifically? **R:** Yes. One NDEr has said, "I saw the US covered with forests and people living in small communities." Another has said, "There will be a major natural disaster in Wyoming." Another NDEr saw a comet striking the earth in China. There are going to be these tests and a lot of misery. The question is, how will we respond? **S:** Will we help our neighbors or do inhumane things to others just to live?

R: The biggest thing that people need to know from NDEs is that we do not die. The fear of death is what is motivating most of the greed in the world and disregard for nature. **S:** And the crises in the world. *What about legends of the destruction of Atlantis and Lemuria? Maybe there's a pattern of civilizations being destroyed and rebirthed?* **S:** It's a cycle of rise and fall. **R:** That's exactly right. NDEr George Ritchie had a vision that there would be spaceships that will take some people away for a time, like Noah's ark. There seems to need to be a reset of some sort for humanity and the earth.

Why is there so much opposition to excellent psi research like Dean Radin's?* **R:** Dean Radin and his team do excellent parapsychological experimental work. The biggest problem he has with scientists is that the phenomena he studies do not fit the physicalist paradigm, so any results he gets are automatically suspect—they can't be real. The other problem is that

the phenomena he's looking at are of the higher dimension so there's inevitably a small effect. In presentiment experiments, the physiological skin response occurs one to two seconds before a picture the subject's about to see, but the computer hasn't really "decided" until a microsecond before the picture shows. This is a robust phenomenon that's easily repeatable but it lacks an explanatory model, so it is just ignored by scientists as an interesting oddity. His double-slit experiment is also not an effect of physics but more likely an effect of this transcendent hyperdimension.

But it seems to us that Radin's biggest problem is that he's taking a shotgun approach to looking at phenomena. It seems the goal is to show that something weird is happening that can't be explained by physicalist science but is clearly present statistically. In our minds that approach amounts to doing only half the work—there also needs to be a framework or theory that explains the phenomena. Otherwise, parapsychologists end up with a collection of anomalies—each phenomenon at best is an interesting small-effect anomaly that can be ignored.

Our suggestion for Radin and other parapsychologists would be to select an archetypal phenomenon that is an example of the whole and carries the entirety of the phenomena within itself. For our studies, the archetype of human consciousness is the NDE because it includes the range of human conscious experience from ordinary consciousness through death, recovery, and aftereffects. We have found important insights about consciousness, death, the afterlife, the nature of reality, healing, the purpose of earthly existence, and spiritual development as a result of examining NDEs in detail.

We would suggest the same approach to Rupert Sheldrake. *Sheldrake's theory of morphogenic fields?* **R:** Yes, Sheldrake has a theory while Radin apparently doesn't. It seems that Sheldrake has looked at numerous different phenomena and he has a general theory of morphic resonance and fields, but we're not aware of Sheldrake developing this general idea in further detail to explain how the fields and resonance work in a specific example, a suitably selected archetypal phenomenon. The numerous phenomena Sheldrake presents in his books are all strongly suggestive of this general theory but there has not been a detailed examination that we're aware of that has carried the ideas further to show the underlying unitive principles.

In general, in parapsychology, there's no attempt to explain what's going on because we don't really know, but actually, we do know if we include a transcendent aspect of our minds having hyperdimensional ability. So with the double-slit experiment, how else can you influence the lasers and collapse the wave function, altering the interference pattern than by purely mental means? Also in the double-slit experiment, consider the first-person phenomena. So what does the meditator say he or she is doing? A broader phenomenological approach could lead to a theory.

I think Radin is assuming that the double-slit effect all derives from physical phenomena, which ignores the whole transcendent aspect of reality. *They're looking at thought as a material process that influences other material things.* **R:** Right, and thought is in this hyperdimension. A psychic's or NDEr's mind is kind of "loosened" from the physical body so they can project their mind or use their energetic field to interact with matter.

The mind can be separate from the body in the fifth dimension? **R:** The mind is an autonomous part of the human being, not the body. Of course in an NDE, the mind separates from the body but even RVers, most of them, say that they do not leave their physical body, yet their mind projects in some way to a remote location and has perceptions. So it isn't like the RVer has to separate their mind from their body but they have to have this kind of "looseness" of the mind, and that skill can be learned.

Is another word for fifth dimension the astral or etheric plane? People have used those kinds of terms for a long time. **R:** Yes, and Steiner does too. They're related but we prefer to go from what the phenomena demonstrate, which is there's another dimension. Steiner says life forces and the astral body and ego are the separated mind. So yes, the fifth dimension is probably the astral. **S:** Steiner calls the separation of the mind from the body a new dimension.

To be clear on this, the fifth dimension is completely different than the quantum field that allows for non-locality? Because the quantum field is physical? **R:** Yes and no, because there are interactions between the transcendent and physical realms. Actually, one part of our theory is derived from evidence that NDErs in the fifth dimension can pass through solid objects (because they're non-material) but they feel a drag or a resistance going through. So that says that a non-material mind can interact with

physical processes and further that a new force is involved. It's a very subtle force.

We spent a lot of time working with a subject who has phantom limbs and we could not find an obvious physical interaction, certainly not measurable on any equipment that we had. The only cases in which the phantom limb clearly interacted were with another subject's brain when we did those experiments. This particular subject was born without fingers in her left hand, except for a part of her thumb, but she subjectively experienced her missing fingers extending from her physical hand. They appear to be "mind fingers," so to say. She felt that she could put them into objects, including into another subject's head and influence their brain. In these cases, the other subject would consistently have unusual sensations.

A second subject, an NDEr, who also had a strong energetic field around her hands and psychokinetic abilities, could do the same thing. The difficulty was that different target subjects who were the target of the NDEr or the phantom limb subject had different subjective experiences, different from one target subject to another.

One NDEr said that when she happened to pass her hand through the doctor's arm during her NDE, she felt the arm had a gelatinous consistency with an electrical current running through it. So it's like she was feeling the neural activations inside the doctor's body. A physical interaction of the mind with another person's body is possible so you can probably project your mind and heal or in other ways influence the other person.

Robert Monroe talks about astral sex where spirits merge in a kind of intimate connection with their spirit bodies. **R:** We're not familiar with that, but we *are* familiar with a person merging with a high spiritual being—they see and feel what that being sees and feels, in particular the being's unconditional love for all of humanity.

You've been interested in biophotons, like John Kruth at the Rhine Center? What is that research? **R:** We have tested two subjects. One is a three-time NDEr and the other is the woman with the phantom fingers. Both subjects produced biophotons. They had to exert themselves to the point where they were exhausted afterwards but they did produce more light than normal for an extended period of time as well as in bursts. The biophotons can sometimes come as bursts for half a second or a second. That particular case is written up in Chapter 9 of *The Self Does Not Die* as our experiments with Cherylee Black.

Why is it important that we radiate photons? Is it because with intention they could intensify it? **R:** The biophotons may be a totally biological effect but they may also be a fifth-dimensional effect. We've already established that there is the interaction between this energetic field and the human brain, although we need to do more experiments with that.

When is your book going to be published? **R:** We have established our theory pretty well now and it's on our YouTube channel and in videos listed on our website, but we haven't started writing yet.

Resources

Website: https://selfconsciousmind.com

YouTube channel:
https://youtube.com/channel/UCqkZopxQev41SrNy8bufMGQ

Research papers: https://selfconsciousmind.com/papers.html

Foreword to *The Self Does Not Die*:
https://selfconsciousmind.com/other.html#foreword

Investigation of George Ritchie's NDE OBE:
https://selfconsciousmind.com/ritchie

Penny Sartori, Ph.D.

Near-Death Experiences Teach Us About Consciousness

Photo by Kay Byrne

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

How does Dr. Sartori respond to arguments that NDEs are simply caused by a dying brain?

What does she see as the implications of NDEs for our understanding of consciousness and for daily living?

I was born in Swansea in South Wales in the UK in 1971. I'm a Cancer. From a young age, I always wanted to be a medical doctor, but when I got to the age where I was supposed to study for university, instead of studying I partied. So I thought, "I'll try nursing" and it's the best thing I ever did. Through my nursing career, I learned about NDEs and was motivated to study them. *You've spent most of your adult life as a nurse working in hospitals. What kind of nursing did you specialize in?* Intensive care. *So that's why you've had encounters with people who had NDEs.*

What motivated you to get a Ph.D.? I didn't know what a Ph.D. was. I just wanted to study NDEs because I became obsessed with them. When I first started my research I was very naïve, thinking at the end of this I will have all of the answers but, actually, my study raised far more questions than it answered. There's so much more to learn about these experiences.

What university was willing to let you delve into that paranormal topic? The University of Wales in Lampeter. I was lucky because Professor Paul Badham was the head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies with a special interest in spiritual experiences. Dr. Badham was an expert on NDEs, although I didn't realize it at the time. I wrote to tell him that I had an interest in death because I was a nurse, but I didn't tell him that I was fascinated by NDEs because he might think I was a bit unusual. When he asked me if I'd be interested in NDEs, I couldn't believe it. This was one in a series of synchronicities that felt as if someone had rolled out a red carpet for me to walk along. My research took over my life and it still does.

Reading all I could about death, I read a chapter in a book by Dr. Badham than mentioned his MA program in death and immortality. He became my supervisor along with Dr. Peter Fenwick* who is a neuropsychiatrist and neurophysiologist. He is also an expert in NDEs. It took me five years to gather the data and interview patients and three more years to analyze the data and write the dissertation. I felt like I was in this state of flow that was just lovely. When my research finished, I was almost at a loss because I didn't know what to do with my time anymore. I can remember sitting in front of the computer for hours at a time, not being productive at all because I was so used to being in front of the computer.

How many NDEs did you collect for your research? In the hospital research, there were only 15 accounts recorded in five years. I looked at the

possible explanations like, is it due to the dying brain, or abnormal blood levels, or the drugs that we give to the patients, or are they just hallucinations? Being a nurse gave me access to patients because we had a rapport from the beginning.

Before we get into your research more deeply, what were the most difficult challenges of your life and how did you cope? The reason I got into my research is I was looking after a dying patient who died a very unpleasant suffering death, which really upset me. During the night shift, this man was in agony. I pulled the screens around him and sat with him, held his hand and helped him to calm down. I went home after my night shift in the morning and I couldn't sleep so I called work to ask about him. They said he died about two hours after I left my shift, which had such a profound impact on me.

It made me question everything and I went through a really dark period of depression, which was one of my biggest challenges in life. On reflection, it was also the best thing that ever happened to me because it made me go inwards. I'm really glad I didn't go and see a doctor for antidepressants because that would have masked the problem. By going within and starting to read about death and dying it changed everything for me.

Was your patient's death so compelling for you because you felt helpless or because he was in so much agony? I touched his electric bed and the bed went a little bit flat and it caused him even more pain. Our eyes connected and I felt like I'd swapped places with him and could understand what he was going through. He had a tracheostomy so he couldn't talk but he was mouthing the words, "Leave me alone. Let me die in peace." Up until that point, I thought I'd been doing a great job, saving lives in the intensive care unit. Then I started to see the wish to die in other patients as well. That made me ask why do we put our patients through this kind of treatment if it's not going to benefit them in the long term?

Do you believe that patients should be allowed to end their lives if they want to use assisted suicide? That's a difficult one. I think it's all individual. I think the more we talk about death as a society, the more we can learn from these conversations. Maybe we go through certain processes because it's something that we learn from. *What's the law in the UK about physician-assisted suicide?* A lot of people go to Switzerland to a place called Dignitas.

A lot of people say, “Penny, studying death is really morbid.” But it’s had an opposite effect on me. I think when we learn about death, we start to learn about life. I’d always been scientifically minded and then I also started reading spiritual texts for the first time. I was always an atheist closed to any sort of religious or spiritual thing.

Were your parents atheists? No, but they weren’t particularly religious. They used to send me to Sunday school so that they could have some time to themselves but they weren’t religious at all. Early on in my research, I went to a conference in the US where someone mentioned the book *Conversations With God.* When I saw it in the airport bookstore, I bought it and loved it. It made me ask what if my preconceived ideas were wrong? Doing my research completely opened my eyes and my mind. *What other spiritual books were impactful?* One of the first books was the *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* and Steven Levine’s *A Year to Live*. I read anything that had “death” in the title and wherever I went I had a book in my hands.

If someone was to look at your possible past lives, I wonder if there’s anything that you brought in that led you to have a mission to explore the effect of death on life. It does feel like my life purpose because it’s taken over my life. *Maybe you had a past life where there was a slaughter of the innocents and you were helpless to stop the massacre. You wanted to help people who were dying or to prevent dying.*

Your dissertation was published as Near Death Experiences of Hospitalized Intensive Care Patients *in 2008.* Yes*,* that was my Ph.D. thesis. There’s not much hospital research being done so we need more of this research. *Then you wrote* The Wisdom of Near Death Experiences *in 2014 and* What is an NDE? A Beginner’s Guide to NDEs *in 2016.* The Transformative Powers of Near Death Experiences: How the Message of NDEs Positively Impact the World *came out in 2017. What’s new in each of those books?* Sometimes we spend so much time trying to find an explanation for what an NDE is that we’ve overlooked the most important thing—the message of the experience.

I think the underlying message from NDEs is to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, the heart of all wisdom traditions. With the life review during the NDE, some people feel like they relived their life in a matter of seconds in great detail. They can feel what it’s like to be in the shoes of people they’ve interacted with during their lives. So if they

inflicted violence on someone they can feel what it's like to receive that violence. *Eben Alexander* said that he didn't have that review of his life because all of his memory was erased but he certainly came back with what you said, the feeling that we will be judged on our actions and pay the consequences. It changed his life.* A lot of people say that during their life review they do the judging so there's no third party who is judging them.

What is a Near Death Experience? was published as part of a series of pocket guides. The last book I published was co-authored with Kelly Walsh, titled *The Transformative Power of Near Death Experiences*, in which people discuss their NDEs and the effect on their lives. Very often people are transformed in many ways such as wanting to be of service to other people. That's certainly the case with Kelly who had an NDE following a suicide attempt when she was in the psychiatric ward. She felt that she was traveling through seven bumps in the universe, as she describes it. It was a struggle for her to get beyond each bump but once she was past the seventh one, she experienced an intense and unconditional love.

When she revived she felt invincible and tried to leave the ward. She created a children's cartoon character and children's book called *Positivity Princess* to promote that message of positivity.[43] She's set up a charity called the Love Care Share Foundation where all the royalties from that book go to this charity to support children around the world. So she is on this mission, typical of many people who had NDEs and want to become of service to other people.

Some NDE survivors report odd results like powerful electrical impulses that make machines and experiments go crazy when they're around. That really fascinates me. I always ask survivors if they have problems wearing wristwatches because very often the watch will stop working for them as well as kettles, computers, and toasters malfunctioning in their presence. [*John Kruth* describes a boy who had the same effect without an NDE.*] That's something that we could measure and devise some experiments to look at that aspect of it. *Do you have any wild ideas why that is?* It seems to be linked with a shift in consciousness. Perhaps these people accessed a deep level of consciousness that normally the brain would screen out. We need to do more research and devise more experiments because not everyone who has an NDE is affected in this way.

You had a patient who had a frozen hand most of his life and after his NDE it opened up and was functional. Any ideas about why? Again we

don't know. His doctors said the tendons in his hand would be in a permanently contracted position so he wouldn't be able to open his hand without surgery to release those tendons. He said, "Look at my hand. I can do that." I've got a signed statement by his sister who said he was never able to open it. If we understood the mechanism behind that, it could potentially save healthcare millions and millions of pounds and dollars.

That makes me think of people who have Dissociative Identity Disorder. One alter will have a medical issue and the other not, so it's similar phenomena. Someone emailed me when my book *The Wisdom of Near Death Experiences* came out and made the connection with people with DDI also having changes in their electromagnetic field. *It would be interesting to hook them up to physiological measurements, heart-rate variability, skin sensitivity, etc. when they were in different alters and see what changed.*

You wrote about Rajaa Benamour who went through the whole creation of the universe during her NDE. Did she remember it? I met her at a conference in Marseille where we both spoke. I was fascinated by her story because she went in for a routine surgery and had this phenomenal experience. She said it was so extensive that it would take five volumes of books to write about it all, but she wrote a book about it in French.

She remembered going through a life review back to her own birth and then back to the creation of the universe. She had changes in her electromagnetic field that were extensive and she acquired in-depth knowledge of quantum physics, which motivated her to enroll in a university course. Her professor said he couldn't understand how Rajaa had such deep-seated knowledge because it was not something that you can acquire through reading books or attending a short course. He felt that some of the topics she was writing about in her papers for him were beyond his own knowledge but that they were being verified by new publications and physics journals

What about the arguments of skeptics that an NDE is caused by oxygen deprivation, the hallucinations of the dying brain. Those are the possibilities I researched. One of my patients met up with a deceased relative in his NDE who gave a message for a living relative. The relative who was astounded that he should know that information. People describe a heightened state of reality more real than real. I documented 12 cases of patients who clearly were hallucinated and compared them with the

experiencers—most of the former were very embarrassed by their behavior. In contrast, for the NDEers it was very precise and they were adamant that it was real, whereas people who'd been hallucinating realized it wasn't real.

About the effect of drugs: If anything, the drugs were more likely to inhibit an experience rather than create it and can impair the recall of the experience. If you look at oxygen and carbon dioxide levels, there were cases where blood was extracted at the time of NDE and the blood levels were within normal limits. Some patients were fully ventilated throughout the time they were unconscious so they were receiving a large amount of oxygen and there was no hypoxia at all, yet they reported an NDE.

I don't think the current explanations for NDEs are feasible because they come from the materialistic, scientific view that the brain produces consciousness. My research suggests that the brain mediates consciousness but it doesn't produce it. My belief is that the brain acts like a filter and screens out the heightened state of consciousness which is around us all the time but we're just not aware of it. There are times in our life where that filter action relaxes and this heightened state of reality is allowed into our everyday experience. I think we're spiritual beings having a temporary human experience.

Bernardo Kastrup said the same thing, mentioning psychedelic drugs or prolonged stress as reducing the filter, although he's not keen on that word. Maybe the reason that indigenous peoples can find the scarce game or water in a very intuitive way is because they're stressed and that somehow opens up the filter of the brain. So unusual stresses create unusual access to other forms of information?* There are different routes to access in this altered state of consciousness, according to the psychological setting. I think what they're all doing is accessing the primary source of consciousness that we've lost touch with.

I've read numerous accounts of people who are technically brain dead on a surgical table, so their brain is not functioning and so memory couldn't be either but afterward they report, "The surgeon inserted a probe in the vein in my left thigh," with a very detailed memory of the experience while brain dead. Technically they wouldn't be brain dead as such. Their hearts may have stopped beating and their EEG would have been flat, so technically they shouldn't have any conscious experience but what they are reporting is a heightened state of reality. That defies the explanation that consciousness is produced by the brain.

A physician, Jeffrey Long, in Louisiana has written about NDEs and reported that some experience something like hell. Professors Bruce Grayson and Nancy Evans Bush categorized NDE types, as described in *Dancing Past the Dark: Distressing Near-Death Experiences*. The first type is the prototypical usual NDE but interpreted in a distressing way. The second type is people find themselves in a black meaningless eternal void. Then the third type is the hellish experience where people feel like they're being dragged down into hell by demons. This form can create a form of PTSD to the point that patients won't talk about it because it's that terrifying.

I had one lady who had the usual kind of NDE but interpreted it in a very frightening way and another lady felt she was looking into hell and started to get very distressed almost to the point of hysteria. She died shortly afterwards. *It's so interesting because religions have talked about Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell so maybe there are some kind of dimensional planes like that depending on your evolution.* We don't know. *I guess the implication is there are different levels depending on if you're Hitler or Buddha. In some of Dr. Long's cases, they had a guide that ushered them out so that was encouraging.*

You mentioned the Journal of Near-Death Studies. *What other journals and organizations do you follow? The Journal of Consciousness Studies* and *The Journal of Scientific Exploration* from the Society for Scientific Exploration. One of the first groups that I joined was the Scientific and Medical Network and the Alistair Hardy Society based at Lampeter University; before that it was at Oxford University. Sir Alistair Hardy was an Oxford Don and biologist who became interested in these experiences. In the 1960s, he put an advert in a national newspaper asking, "Have you ever sensed a presence greater than yourself that you can't explain?" He had about 6,000 replies. I've been lucky enough to sit in the archives of the Alistair Hardy Society and read some of those letters; a lot of them describe NDEs. They were before Raymond Moody's *Life After Life* came out in 1975.

What about universities that include the paranormal or parapsychology or psi research? Edinburgh had an endowed chair that produced grad students who spread around the UK to teach. Also in Northampton with Professor Chris Roe.* The University of Wales Lampeter has a strong department as well, which is where I studied. Professor Les

Lancaster* offers an MSc in Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology at Liverpool John Moores and the Alef Trust. Steve Taylor* at the University of Leeds has done a lot of work on spiritual experience as well.

It's very tempting to turn to quantum mechanics to try to explain these paranormal phenomena. Quantum entanglement could be an explanation for people who have empathic or shared death experiences as when a patient dying in a hospital in the UK might appear at the bedside of the living relative to say goodbye. My grandmother and I used to talk about death because she was well aware of my research. She told me, "I'll come back and wind you up." After she died, I was at the backyard with music on and the music blasting so I ran to turn it down, but it blasted four or five times. I said, "Nana, that's you winding me up, isn't it?" and it stopped.

If you're not working as a nurse now, are you being a full-time writer and speaker? No, I work at the university in Swansea in the adult education department. I did teach two courses about my research. The first module was about science, spirituality, and health. The second module was exploring the mind and consciousness. There was a lot of demand for them to be continued but I don't teach now. I'm looking to do online courses. I do a lot of speaking events on weekends and in the evenings and that's what I want to be doing more.

How many people have shared their experiences on your online webpage? When my book *The Wisdom of Near Death Experiences* came out it was serialized in a national newspaper and as a result, I've still got to reply to over 14,000 emails. I replied to a lot of them in the beginning but it was a full-time job. I was pregnant at the time as well with my son, so I had to stop. He's five now and keeps me busy.

Do you have another book in your mind or have you kind of exhausted NDEs? A book has been on the back burner for about six years, so I've not really got very far with it, but I was looking at consciousness from both ends. When I started my Ph.D., I got very interested in pre-birth experiences. I thought if you can have a consciousness when you're about to die perhaps you can have consciousness before as well. It made me think about all different types of consciousness. I'd like to get back to that because I have linked up with a few people who remember their physical birth and remember being in the womb. Technically they shouldn't have any memories because the neural circuits in the brain haven't formed. In

some cultures, people have significant dreams of choosing their parents. *Michael Newton's books about our lives before we incarnate tell about how we chose our next life setting.*

What do you do for fun? How do you keep balance in the face of all this work and writing and family? Spending time with my family—my son especially—keeps me busy. I used to go surfing, put a mattress in the back of a van and drive to the beach and sleep overnight there. That's great but I don't get much chance for that anymore.

Is there anything else that you would like people to know about NDEs? Don't be afraid of death. Start exploring it. Read about it because when you start to learn about death you start to learn about life. Seek out people who've had an NDE, have a chat with them because they are the experts. They've got such wisdom that we can learn from. *You make the point that some people are ready to die so we shouldn't make them hang around and suffer.* Exactly.

Books

The Near Death Experiences of Hospitalized Intensive Care Patients, 2008
The Wisdom of Near Death Experiences, 2014
What is an NDE? A Beginner's Guide to NDEs, 2016
The Transformative Power of Near Death Experiences: How the Messages of NDEs Positively Impact the World, 2017

Peter Russell, Ph.D.

The Consciousness Revolution

Photo by Christina Tucker

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Dr. Russell's path to spiritual awareness didn't go through traditional religion. What path worked to explain his deeper consciousness and how does he define this state of mind?

Taking time for introspection increased synchronicities for the author, such as meeting an important business partner and friend. What do they indicate about consciousness?

What is contemporary science's weakness, according to the author?

I was born in London in May 1946, the first-born. *You're a Taurus. You're living in California now, but what was it about your childhood upbringing in England that led you to become a physicist? What was your parents' approach to religion?* Their approach to religion was sort of orthodox for those days. They weren't particularly religious but everybody in the village went to church on Sundays, so we'd probably go to church once a month or so. A few Catholics stood out but everyone was basically Anglican Church of England in those days. I debated whether I was an atheist or agnostic as a teenager.

What led you to study physics? I started off studying mathematics rather than physics. I was very good at it, I enjoyed it, and my father liked math so I got encouragement from him. Mathematics and theoretical physics are basically the same subject. *What was it like to study with Stephen Hawking at Cambridge?* It was wonderful, although his illness was just coming on and we all thought he probably had two or three years to live. He had just finished his Ph.D. and was doing his very early work on black holes. He could still walk and talk although his speech was getting affected a bit but he was always funny and that's what I liked about him. He never let his affliction get to him. He didn't want to be helped; he wanted to be treated like anybody else.

What do you think happened to him and will happen to us after we die? Do you think that there is a consciousness that continues? I really don't know, because there are lots of different theories and ideas. I try not to get caught up in beliefs. *Ian Stevenson and Jim Tucker studied over 2,500 children who remember their past lives. Is there another explanation for that besides they had past lives?* It could be some sort of paranormal

connection with somebody from the past who may be actually influencing their bodies in some way.

How did you evolve an interest in consciousness and spirituality? Interest in consciousness was always there in the background. I rejected religion as mumbo-jumbo and with that I rejected spirituality. But I was always interested in what was consciousness and the brain-mind-body problem. As I got deeper and deeper into physics, I realized there was no easy answer to those questions I had about why there is consciousness in the universe.

That led me into exploring meditation where I began to see there was something to spirituality after all. I saw that there was a spiritual aspect to life that religions had gotten confused about and lost in doctrine. I rejected religion but I saw that there was something they knew about human consciousness that I wanted to understand. *Huston Smith says the common core of religions is a belief in the after-life, a higher power, and cause and effect. What did you find?* I think that's true in terms of what religions believe. I was more interested in a personal awakening, a personal shift away from an egocentric consciousness to a more liberated mode of consciousness. It's about discovering a deeper sense of self rather than the socially conditioned materialistic self.

Meditation can be a stress relief and a way to calm the mind as a health benefit. How did meditation lead you to spiritual interests? I was always more interested in the nature of consciousness and of self. There is a much deeper aspect to meditation when the mind quietens down and becomes silent, when you begin to get in touch with a whole other dimension of consciousness. *Can you give an example of an insight that you had in meditation that is beyond the rational mind?* For me, the experience of sitting in the spaciousness of complete silence is really beyond the rational. The rational mind is switched off in that space, where it gets so delicious you realize this is what the great mystics mean when they talk about the eternal moment, the eternal present, the peace that passeth all understanding. That's what interests me; Buddhists call it true nature; to me, it is the experience of being beyond the rational mind.

Was Transcendental Meditation [TM] your entry into meditation? Yes, it was where I really got going. I explored a couple of different Buddhist practices but hadn't gotten very far. I came across TM and it worked and so I stuck with that quite a while. *What's your practice now?*

It's something that I've evolved for myself using the completely effortless approach of TM. *With a mantra?* No, I don't find the mantra is necessary anymore. Now I know how to let the mind drop into silence and so, for me, it's about sitting and coming back to that stillness.

Many scientists say that they get their great insights after sleeping or letting go of a problem; it comes to them from the unconscious. Do you find that you get insights that way as well? Yes, I think that's generally true for almost everybody. If you are trying to solve some problem, it's often when you let it go that the idea comes to you. When you take your mind off of a problem what we know unconsciously begins to express itself. *And maybe tune into a higher source of information as well?* I don't use those terms myself. For me it's a deeper source, it's something within us. I am not sure it is coming from beyond us. *Hinduism offers the concept of the Akashic Records where everything is stored as on a universal hard drive where we can access information that's beyond our personal mind.* Maybe they exist: I don't know personally.

Could it be the same as quantum non-locality that happens when two entangled particles are separated and communicate at a distance with no time lapse in their communication? That's a whole different topic. Non-locality isn't about communication happening faster than the speed of light or the same time, but rather a correlation between the states that cannot be explained in the normal cause-effect, space-time model. Most scientists will point out that it's not actually a communication that's happening, it's a correlation of events in space and time.

I've heard it described as a unified macrocosm in the microcosm so that the information is exchanged like a hologram. This could explain the efficacy of prayer from a distance or premonitions or any paranormal knowledge. It could, but I am always cautious of grabbing things in physics to explain the paranormal. I am not doubting the paranormal at all but it may be something completely different.

Carl Jung said something very important when he coined the term "synchronicity." It's an acausal connecting principle with no cause and effect. There are meaningful coincidences, but he pointed out that it doesn't fall into the normal cause-effect mode of thinking. As soon as we ask how to explain it, I think we are falling into the trap of trying to find the cause for it. There's something going on that we don't understand and we'll probably never understand. I think the human mind understands things as

cause and effect but there's something which is happening beyond the capacity of human consciousness to understand.

Have you experienced that kind of unexplained coincidence in your life? Throughout my life. *What's a juicy example?* When I'm on a meditation retreat and the more clear my consciousness is, the more they happen. One day I took a break from writing to take a random walk and I ended up following signs towards an art exhibition. I met a guy there who lived only a block away. I had never seen him before but we turned out to have many common interests and ended up organizing a whole internet business together for several years. We became very good friends with a very important work connection.

What have been some of the biggest challenges that you've faced in your life and how did you deal with them? The discipline of writing, which I enjoy, does take a lot of time. Finding balance is an important thing for me. I've gone a long time not writing at all and then I'll give my all to writing when I'm totally absorbed by it and not involved in anything else. *Jung says that relationships bring up the shadow, our unconscious material.* Yes, relationships bring up the issues we have to work on. When we get into a relationship with somebody, whatever it is we need to work on often gets triggered. I've had long-term relationships but never actually got married.

In the evolution of your thinking in your books, how did you get from consciousness and meditation to topics like management? The first book was a book on meditation, then a book on *The Upanishads* and then *The Global Brain*, *The Brain Book*, and *The Creative Manager*. I started working in corporations in the '80s and was doing a lot of work taking the human potential movement into corporations in terms of personal development, which was very new in those days. I did a lot of work on creativity, helping teams in major corporations to work with problem-solving. We took teams on a retreat for a week to really dig into helping them with the problems they were facing. The book came out of that work with managers.

What was new about your approach other than facilitating talking through issues and understanding each other's viewpoints? The whole notion of mindset was very new then, the idea that we actually create our experiences of reality. Different people have completely different experiences and we think, "I am right and they are wrong." Our mindset, our interpretation of the world, affects our emotions, our reactions, and may

cause stress. Opening up into understanding how our minds work is nearly always valuable in creativity if you've gotten blocked in some way. People come up with a bright idea when they are not thinking about the problem because we get stuck in a certain channel and a certain mindset about the solution. I helped people see what their mindsets were and how to step outside them so they could begin to look at things with fresh eyes. Now the idea is common, but it was pretty new in those days.

If Congress gave you a lot of money to help highly divided Republicans and Democrats work together, how would you approach them on a retreat? I would pick an issue rather than just the abstract. We would look at all aspects of the issue, all the information they have about it, and what hasn't worked, in order to gather data. Then we would look at their assumptions around the issue? Often we don't see them as assumptions, we see them as facts. When the participants begin to see how the assumptions limit them, what are some of the new ways to look at this issue?

What is The Consciousness Revolution *about? You wrote that book with Stanislav Grof and Ervin Laszlo.* That book is a conversation we had looking at the shifting consciousness happening in the world, the growing realization that to solve the problems, we need to look at ourselves and our own egocentric thinking caught in materialistic approaches. We looked at the need for a shifting consciousness, how it could happen, and some of the evidence that it was happening. *How would you update* The Consciousness Revolution*?* I think we've come a long way. It's much more everyday talk now since we realized that we need a shift in consciousness: Just the idea of meditation became much more mainstream. For example, many corporations in Silicon Valley are working on how they can liberate the consciousness of their people. When I started working in corporations, I was actually told not to tell anybody what I was doing because it was so sensitive, they didn't want the press to get hold of it. Now they want the press to talk about what they are doing with consciousness, so I think we've really moved forward.

What can a large corporation like Google do to enhance higher consciousness? They are introducing meditation and mindfulness practices. *But at the same time autocrats are being elected globally and it looks like we are devolving into some kind of dystopia rather than evolving. How does all this happen at the same time?* It often does happen at the same time. More conservative elements are showing their heads much more, maybe in

a reaction to the unfolding revolution. As more and more people begin to wake up, this evokes the adverse reaction of the people who are holding on to the old views. *It's a Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, synthesis?* In a way, yes.

What were you exploring in your book, The Brain Book: How To Know Your Own Mind and How To Use It*?* That was based on the work I was doing in corporations with mind maps, memory, attitudes, etc. to help people use their brains in a better, more productive way. *What's something you shared in that book that people may not know about how to use their brains effectively?* People probably know that memory works by association so if you want to remember something, it's good to associate that with something that's outlandish and unusual. I was working with Tony Buzan who developed mind maps which is a way of organizing ideas, not the linear way but a much more organic way of organizing your ideas on paper. *You draw a wheel and spokes before you write an essay?* More like a sort of spider web, a web of ideas to see how they interact or cross-connect.

Are you hopeful, although we have less than 10 years to change our emission of carbon dioxide that's wrecking the planet? The hope for me is how we care for each other. The awakening that is happening may not necessarily make the world a perfect place but it is going to help us in difficult times. *Such as during economic disasters we open our hearts to each other?* Yes, when a whole town is flattened, people begin to care for each other as during the massive fires in California. *In her book* A Paradise Built in Hell*, Rebecca Solnit confirmed your observation.*

In From Science to God*, you wrote about how to build a bridge to the light. What can we do to cross the bridge to find new meaning in God?* That comes back to our own spiritual awakening with consciousness as the bridge. Science basically has ignored consciousness and throws spirituality out the window, while organized religion hasn't really facilitated that inner spiritual awakening of the people, with the exception of Eastern religions a little bit. Religions are more about do this, do that, and have faith in God and everything will be okay, but they haven't worked on awakening the individual like the great mystics have discovered. As science opens up an understanding of consciousness, science and religion can begin to meet and see they are talking about different sides of the same coin.

Consciousness has to do with awareness. Is that a synonym? To be conscious is to be aware; the one thing we all share is that we are aware.

Does this mean that if you can experience pain, you have consciousness, but if you are an amoeba, you probably can't experience pain so you don't have consciousness? I wouldn't say an amoeba is totally devoid of consciousness. I don't think there's anywhere we can draw a line between creatures that are unconscious and those that are conscious. *Plants have consciousness, according to books such as* The Secret Life of Plants *by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird,* The Hidden Life of Trees *by Peter Wohlleben, and* Thus Spoke the Plant *by Monica Gagliano. Do animals have consciousness?* Of course. They clearly are aware, and they dream at night—dreaming is something that happens in consciousness. *Rupert Sheldrake studies dogs who had ESP, they knew when their people were coming home and greeted them at the door even if not at the usual time.*

In your book The Global Brain*, you talk about the internet and how it connects us all to communicate around the world.* When I was writing that, the internet hardly existed. I'd done a lot of work with networking and computers; what I saw was that as computers began to link people up, the networks of computers spread across the world in much the same way as the brain grows in the embryo, making more and more connections. I hypothesized that maybe human computer networks are like the brain of the planet. At that time I talked about the Gaia hypothesis and the earth as a living system. Maybe we are a nervous system to the planet and so the question is, is the planet becoming aware through us? *Do you have a sense of that? Because if she is, she is probably irate.* Who knows what's happening at that level?

How would you characterize the impact of the Internet on young people? I think many technologies are two-edged. I recently read how children who spend a lot of time on their devices are not so empathetic with people because they don't learn to read faces like most children who are two or three or four years old when they learn to empathize with people by their expression.

You discuss waking up in time, finding inner peace in times of accelerated change; are we waking up in time? We are waking up and science and technology are accelerating. Our effect on the environment is accelerating at the same pace so we may have technology beyond our dreams in a world that's falling apart at the seams and real awareness that we've never had before. It will be a whole different world.

Authors like Gregg Braden think that extraterrestrial entities have influenced us, even changed our chromosomes. Do you have any sense that there are extraterrestrial entities out there? I know there's a lot of interesting evidence. Molecular biologists and geneticists can trace the evolution of our genes, all the way back millions and millions of years. As far as I know, there's no place where suddenly strange things happen, so I don't think they came and messed with our genes. *What's interesting to me is that lizards and human beings have similar DNA so there's not a lot of difference between us or, especially, our relatives—the chimps and bonobos. It's amazing that just a few differences have such a big impact.* One of the main differences is the genes that control the development in the brain in the embryo. That seems one of the important distinctions between us and the other great apes.

You have a new book, Seeds of Awakening. *What was new and different about this book in 2018?* It's a collection of essays that I've written looking at the awakening of consciousness, things that I found helpful in my own practice about how to understand ourselves and our consciousness and how to awaken it. I talk about understanding what we mean by the true self, about the nature of love, about free will, and forgiveness, what it means to be in the moment, how our minds get caught up in thinking patterns, and how to develop our own synchronicity, etc.

You talk about our true nature. What is it? The true nature of consciousness has two very strong characteristics. Our true nature is to be at peace and we mess it up by getting caught up in our thinking, our worries, our anxieties. I think it's the same with love; our true nature is love. When we are caught up in judgments, what we want and our worries, we cut ourselves off from our true nature; we cut ourselves off from the peace and love which are our intrinsic qualities in our consciousness. *How do we get back to that besides meditation?* Meditation allows the mind to become still and, for me, that's the way to fall back into that quality of peace and notice that lovingness. The direct path is to let the mind become still.

Do you have another book percolating on the back burner? I have a book on letting go which I will get down to writing. *Letting go of false beliefs?* That's part of it and surrendering to the present moment in various aspects of letting go. *What's your process for writing a book?* I have an outline and I usually have notes I've made over the years in preparation. I write the book in order of the outline. I tend to go through a draft a number

of times polishing it in a sculpting process. *Are your notes handwritten or do you have them on the computer?* I always start with handwriting. I grew up that way and it's a natural way for me to express ideas. I start off with handwritten notes and then after that, I work on the computer with the ideas.

Let's talk about some of the organizations involved in expanding consciousness, like your work with IONS. I was closely involved with IONS but not a lot in recent years. Dean Radin* is doing work on consciousness and paranormal and they have a whole education branch [*with workshops*]. IONS was founded by astronaut Edgar Mitchell. When he came back from the moon he focused on how we can develop consciousness and founded IONS to do that. I am a fellow with the Findhorn Foundation, an honorary position. Of all those sorts of communities that started back in the '60s and '70s, they are the one that continues to exist and grow. I think Findhorn has about 600 members and they are building ecological villages, a great success story.

The Club of Budapest is an offshoot from the Club of Rome, organized back in the late '60s and early '70s when it published *Limits To Growth* in 1972, probably one of the first environmental studies. Ervin Laszlo was one of the people on their team of researchers and later set up the Club of Budapest to bring awareness about the need for development of consciousness. They bring together key thought leaders, mainly in Europe, to get people to think about the role of consciousness in the evolution of the planet.

What about conferences doing this kind of consciousness work? There's a Towards a Science of Consciousness conference held in Tucson. The Sages and Scientists conference is put on by Deepak Chopra from time to time to bring spiritual teachers and scientists together, usually in Los Angeles, plus the annual conference of Science and NonDuality in Europe or the States.

Psi research demonstrates outcomes thousands of times beyond probability, using double-blind studies, but it's still dismissed. Where are we in a shift in consciousness if solid psi research is ignored? I think this is always the case when you've got a major paradigm shift. We hold on to the old ideas, as has been the case throughout the history of science. Remember when Galileo found evidence with his telescope to show that Copernicus was right and the Earth wasn't the center of the universe, the Catholic

bishops refused to look through his telescopes because they knew it was wrong. He was put under house arrest in 1633 for talking about this obvious heresy.

We live in a world where science is very materialistic in that the basic premise of modern science is that when we understand the world of space, time, matter, and energy, we will understand everything. Consciousness is just some epiphenomenon that arises out of space, time and matter. Anything that begins to say that consciousness has an influence or that the paranormal is real, goes against that worldview. They are just not going to look at it, whereas something that fits in their worldview requires far less evidence to be accepted.

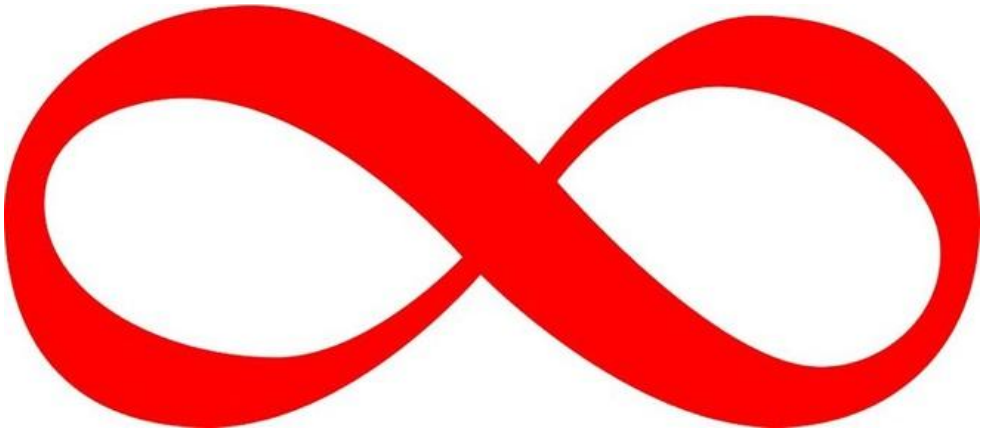
In the midst of all this deep thinking, what do you do for fun? My work is fun. I also like having good conversations with friends, walking, and I love being at the beach and the ocean.

Books

The TM Technique, 1976, 1990, 2018
The Upanishads, 1978, 1990
The Brain Book, 1979, 2005
Meditation, 1979
The Awakening Earth, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990
The Global Brain, 1983
*The Creative Manager (*with Roger Evans), 1989, 1992
The White Hole in Time, 1992
The Global Brain Awakens, 1995, 2002
Waking Up in Time, 1998
The Consciousness Revolution, 1999, 2004
From Science to God, 2003
Seeds of Awakening, 2018

Section Three

Extrasensory Perception (ESP, Remote Viewing, Mediums)



Julie Beischel, Ph.D.

A Scientist Studies Mediums

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What motivated an agnostic scientist to study mediums in a scientific way?

What has the Windbridge Center found about the characteristics and brain patterns for mediums?

I was born in Ohio, but don't really identify with being from the Midwest because we moved to Arizona when I was three. My Myers-Briggs is ENTJ. I'm a Libra who loves justice. *Most of the scientists I am interviewing are bi-coastal. A few exceptions like Larry Dossey from Texas and some people from Ohio but the coasts seemed to generate the most innovative thinkers*. We did a giant survey study of mediums and non-mediums that found no differences in general demographics, but there were fewer mediums in the Midwest than any other part of the country. I'm not sure why.

My extended family is tremendously Catholic and that might have had more of an impact on me if I had stayed closer to them growing up. In Arizona, I went to a private Catholic high school. Things did change when I went to college and met people who had other worldviews. I consider myself an agnostic now. My parents were smart people but there was a long-standing family belief system. Of my grandfather's siblings, there were three priests and a nun. At one point after I started doing research with mediums, I visited Cincinnati and I had to break the news to my Catholic grandparents. My grandfather said, "I read a story in the diocese newspaper about a priest who went to a psychic, so I guess it's okay."

You majored in the sciences? My undergrad degree is in environmental science with a microbiology emphasis and my Ph.D. is in pharmacology and toxicology with a minor in microbiology and immunology. My parents were both pharmacists and I was always a scientist. *There weren't many women pharmacists when your mother was going to graduate school. What was the impetus for her?* She was really smart and considered medical school but there weren't many female physicians at the time. She was also really good in math but there weren't a lot of women in that department either. Pharmacy incorporated both of those subjects, so she did that.

In eighth grade, I was the kid who got the science award. As a teenager, I was very interested in the environment. In my senior year of college, I took medical microbiology and found that it was actually more interesting to me than water cycles. When it was time to apply to graduate school, I considered getting my M.D., but in a Ph.D. program, you have to have unique and original research ideas and come up with a testable hypothesis. I like that kind of thinking, so a Ph.D. was a better fit for me.

What were the most difficult challenges in your life? My mother was mentally ill and ended up committing suicide when I was in my 20s. Growing up in that environment, I never fully learned compassion until I met my husband; I am so grateful for him in my life. He is a really gentle personality and I had to learn to be a good partner to him. If I needed to learn compassion in this life, I had to grow up in a place devoid of it, and then I had to find it and learn it. I had to volitionally manifest and create it, so that's my understanding of my existence. When I was 18, I started to develop symptoms of multiple sclerosis and I got officially diagnosed when I was 19 or 20. I am 44 now and living medication-free but I have to manage my stress and my time carefully, so that continues to be a challenge.

Usually, young people who succeed in difficult circumstances have at least one mentor like a teacher or a clergyperson who encourages them and believes in them. I don't have a lot of memories of my childhood. Once I met my husband, I knew I needed to fix things because I wanted our relationship to work, so I saw a therapist for 10 years and that definitely made all the difference and you could categorize her as a mentor.

How did you get interested in studying mediums? I got into mediumship research a few years after my mom died. I saw a medium on TV and thought, "That looks real but that's a TV show so I'll have to check it out for myself," so I saw a medium. I told the other pharmacology students and professors in grad school about my meeting with the medium, and, as good scientists, most of them said, "I don't know anything about that but that it sounds like you had a very interesting experience." Some of them said, "They are all frauds. You got duped." And I said, "No, I was there. That's not what happened." Then my need for justice kicked in and I thought most mediums are just trying to help people and they need a scientist to defend them. And the universe and providence heard me and said, "Here, I am opening all those doors. That's what you are going to do with your life now."

When you went to the medium, did she channel your mother? We don't use the word "channel" but yes, my mom communicated with her. *Why don't you use that word?* Historically, it's used to describe communication with beings other than dead human beings, like spirit guides or ascended masters. When a medium provides messages from a deceased person to a living sitter (the person who is requesting the communication),

we call that mediumship. *The medium said things that only you would know were true and she wasn't reading your mind?* Yes, I write about this in my book *Among Mediums*. She said things that I had to check with my aunt to verify.

At the time of that first reading, I didn't know anything about mediums. I found a book on the dollar table at a bookstore about how fake psychics take advantage of people and the scams that they run. The last chapter had a piece about mediumship describing cold reading, so I was very cautious. At one point in the reading, the medium said my mom was talking about the station wagon we had and how she always wanted us to look like we were like the happy Brady Bunch, although we weren't. My memory of the station wagon was that we left a green crayon in this car in the Phoenix sun and it melted into the carpet of the station wagon. In my head I am screaming, "green crayon, green crayon!" but although I am trying to send this to her, she didn't pick it up at all. While scientifically I can't call this definitive evidence, it was an important jumping-off point for my future controlled research. *Gary Schwartz* had similar findings.*

Did your mother express regret about committing suicide or was it something she felt she had to do because of her mental health? She didn't express regret or apologize—not everyone who commits suicide does—but her personality came through; she was very pragmatic so I think she was trying to identify herself. My grandmother came through first and the medium said, "She had to show your mom how to do it," which I thought was really interesting.

What other challenges have you faced? We study what happens to our consciousness after physical death. There's no topic more applicable to more people than that one, but our funding is next to nothing. That makes it very difficult just to buy paper and printer ink, let alone run the large-scale studies this field needs to move forward. Also, being young and female in a scientific field is difficult. I asked a female colleague how long it took for her male colleagues in the parapsychology community to take her seriously and she said 10 years. That was a while ago. For the most part, I've found men in this field are very supportive.

When I was getting my Ph.D. in Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara, a history professor on my committee didn't think that women should be professors so he made it really hard for me. It isn't just the sciences, there is a bias throughout academia. I would agree and this

extends outside of academia as well. Some time ago, an author interviewed a bunch of researchers in our field and wrote chapters about them. In one chapter he wrote about Stephen Braude.* The author was telling a story about when Braude was in college, but the author still referred to him as "Dr. Braude." Throughout my whole chapter, he called me "Julie." A lot of times people think I am somebody's assistant.

Spiritualism came into fashion in the mid-1800s and scientists like those in the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) started studying mediums in 1884. In séance situations, many mediums would go into full trance and become hosts for dead people. The primarily male scientists would treat these mediums like guinea pigs and lab rats; in order to prove how deep their trance was, they would burn them with acid and things like that. Eventually, mediumship research fell away while the research on telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis took hold in the 1930s. There were a few exceptions, like Erlendur Haraldsson who did research with mediums in Iceland, but really there was not a whole lot going on until the early 2000s when it started to come back in Scotland and in the US.

The secular mediums in America today work differently than the SPR mediums in the 1880s. The modern mediums we study don't usually go into full trance and they provide readings over the phone, on Skype, and in person. We call them secular because they are not part of an organized religious belief system.

The process of starting an institute must have been enormous because it's not just the physical place, it's the fundraising, which is huge as you've implied. How did you two go about doing that? Once my husband, Mark Boccuzzi, and I decided to do this, a lot of things started falling into place. We got a lot of emotional support from friends and colleagues. Everybody we asked agreed to be on our scientific advisory board right away, so we had these big names behind us. The tricky part is keeping our overhead low so we can do this work on the limited funding available in this field. During the first year of The Windbridge Institute, we were awarded a grant from the BIAL Foundation in Portugal, which gave us the boost we needed to get going.

In 2017 we created the Windbridge Research Center and moved all the afterlife and medium research there. The Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that can receive donations. In addition to research grants, we rely heavily on individual and private foundation donations to keep the

Center running. *Does the Institute continue as well?* Yes, the mission of the Institute is to normalize, optimize, and utilize psi functioning. We explain online, "In addition to conducting research in applied psi, the Institute is also developing new products and services that promote mindfulness, creativity, intuition, and directed intention."

These include our free mindfulness app, CloudBlue for Android, and our free intuition training and practice online app, "A Dog's Tale." We've also created Meaningful Messages cards which provide a non-treatment-based means for continuing loving, inspiring relationships with deceased loved ones and we offer Mindfulness Meditation Cards, a limitless tool for exploring a personal path toward mindfulness.

At the Windbridge Research Center, we developed three research programs: the Information, Operation, and Application Research Programs. In the Information program, we study the accuracy of the information that the mediums report. In the Operation program, we look at how they do what they do—their psychology, their personality, their physiology, and so on. The Application program focuses on how mediumship readings can help society, especially as a treatment for grief.

When we study mediums, we don't treat them like lab rats. We respect their process and they are co-researchers. Part of the first grant we were awarded from the BIAL Foundation was to create and maintain a team of research mediums. We developed an eight-step screening procedure and identified a group of 20 Windbridge-certified research mediums. We wanted to build a team of mediums who could follow protocols, recognize the need for proper experimental controls, and provide input during protocol design and research directions.

In the testing process, the medium, the sitter and the experimented are blinded, right? The sitter doesn't have any contact with the medium. The experimenter acts as a proxy for the absent sitter. In our standard accuracy testing protocol, I am the proxy sitter and I get on the phone with the medium, we do the reading and record it. The reading is formatted into an itemized list and emailed, along with a different list, from a different deceased person as a decoy, to the sitter for scoring. The sitter receives a formatted transcript of what the medium said but the sitter never hears the reading as it takes place.

What were the criteria for screening your 20 mediums? When we first started recruiting for our program, we had hundreds of mediums sign up.

But that number dropped considerably once the applicants fully understood the requirements and long-term commitments of the program. In order to become Windbridge Certified Research Mediums, participants needed to complete eight testing and training steps. These included written questionnaires, interviews, a battery of personality and psychological tests, controlled phone readings, and the successful completion of several training steps, including human research participant ethics. The entire process could take a year to complete and, once accepted into the program, it was expected that the medium volunteer a minimum of four hours a month to assist in various aspects of the research. There is also a code of ethics.

After learning about the entire process, many mediums, understandably, self-selected out of the program. Only those who were committed and confident in their abilities remained. Of those mediums, about 25% of them didn't achieve the accuracy scoring threshold we decided on. We are very quick to point out that a mediumship reading involves three people and the medium is only one of them; the sitter and the deceased person also have an impact. It can be anybody's "fault" when it doesn't go well. When a medium doesn't pass our test, it doesn't automatically mean that she is a bad medium. It just means she didn't do well with that deceased person and that sitter on that day.

You found that there are personality characteristics of the successful research mediums: highly conscientious, agreeableness, openness, and low neuroticism, while they do tend to have certain diseases like autoimmune disorders. What does that tell you? After we studied the Windbridge mediums, we did a bigger study of mediums who completed an online survey using a standardized test of what's called "fantasy proneness," that is, in essence, people with vivid imaginations. The 133 mediums in that study did score higher than the 234 non-mediums in fantasy proneness; that personality characteristic allows them an ability to see the world in a different way than a materialist way of seeing things. Our research mediums score high on agreeableness and conscientiousness and low in neuroticism. They were open to being tested by a scientist; you have to be low in neuroticism for that. In the bigger study of 133 mediums, they also showed lower neuroticism than non-mediums.

How did you find the 133 mediums? Through our email list, our Facebook pages, and word-of-mouth with help from the Rhine Research Center and the Forever Family Foundation. What surprised me is that

mediums are more left-handed or ambidextrous than the general population. *What percentage of the mediums were female*? In our sample, over 90%. *Do you think that's just role socialization? Is there more social permission for women to channel and put their ego aside?* That's a really interesting question. I could speculate, but I'd like to actually research this in the future.

In your research, did you find any differences in the mediums' brain waves when they were communicating or not? Yes, we conducted an electroencephalogram, EEG, study in which there were four conditions: recollection—think of someone that you know; fabrication—make up someone and think about them; perception—listen while I tell you this story about someone; and communication—talk to a deceased person that you know. All four conditions look different. When the medium was just listening to me talk, it looks closest to the communication.

The finding suggests that the experience of communicating with the deceased may be a distinct mental state that is not consistent with brain activity during ordinary thinking or imagination. I should point out that, that study also revealed using EEG to study the accuracy of mediums' statements during a reading is a really bad idea. The mediums can't talk while we collect the EEG data because jaw muscle movement adds a lot of artifacts to the data. To get around this, the mediums had to remain silent and still for a period of time before they could report any messages. This process was very disruptive and uncomfortable. EEG can be used in mediumship research but only under very specific circumstances.

You found that different parts of the brain lit up with different tasks. Correct. *Does that mean that doing mediumship work involves a specific part of the brain?* No, just because we asked them to enter into a state of communication with a deceased person we can't prove that that's what they were doing. All that it really shows is they were accomplishing a different mental task at that time. In our operation research program, we are interested in what the mediums have to say about what they are doing and experiencing. In the 1880s, with the trance séance mediums, they didn't have any recollection of what happened, so you couldn't ask them about it. Now, we do a lot of phenomenology research, the study of experiences, where we ask the mediums about their experiences when communicating with deceased and compare it, for example, to their descriptions of when they talk about psychic readings for the living to see if there are differences.

If I am reading someone's chakras, sometimes I'll get pictures but it also feels like a thought so I don't distinguish between doing the psychic work and medium work. In your practice, it sounds like it doesn't really matter where the information came from because it's the content of the information that you are looking for. *Right, but it involves putting aside your ego and your logical thinking because if you start to think then you impose your ideas and it interferes. It takes being kind of passive, which might be a reason that it would be harder for men because they are trained to be active, to have answers, to have solutions and not just passively receive.* In our survey, 97% of the mediums said they were able to differentiate between psychic information about the living and the communication from the dead but it doesn't happen the same way for all of them.

You found that some mediums have a sense of taste which they don't have when they are working with living. In our research, we have found that mediums will see, hear and feel things in their bodies like the cause of death, and smell scents associated with the deceased like perfume or cigar smoke, and taste things as well. In some cases, the deceased person wants to share their favorite foods with the sitter to help identify them. In the psychic readings, they didn't report tasting things.

Do you feel tempted to try psychic mediumship work? No, I didn't want to be biased and I didn't want to make any judgments because I did it differently. Researcher Charles Tart* talks about "state-specific" sciences. He wondered how can you study something without doing it yourself and seeing what it feels like. I am a good scientist, but I have no idea what kind of medium I would be, so I use my gifts where they landed and I don't have any desire to talk to the deceased.

What are your current research projects? At the Windbridge Research Center, we are continuing to conduct basic and applied research with mediums. Other projects include empirical evaluations of the effectiveness of methods aimed at reducing anxiety related to the fear of death, understanding the nature and prevalence of end-of-life experiences, and empirical evaluations of treatments for grief. In addition to research, I'm also working with members of our scientific and clinical boards to create free, open-access educational materials, including articles, videos, and online classes aimed at researchers, clinicians, practitioners, and the general public. The Center also publishes *Threshold: Journal of Interdisciplinary*

Consciousness Studies, a free, online-only, peer-reviewed, open-access journal that disseminates information focusing on interdisciplinary studies of consciousness as it relates to dying, death, and what comes next. Of course, none of this work is possible without financial support.

What do you do for fun? I love being surrounded by color. When I'm not working or hanging out with my husband, I'm usually absorbed in some type of art or craft project. I really enjoy jewelry making and have recently started selling some of my creations in a local boutique.

Books

Among Mediums: A Scientist's Quest for Answers, 2013
Meaningful Messages: Making the Most of Your Mediumship Reading, 2013
From the Mouths of Mediums: Conversations with Windbridge Certified Research Mediums, Vol. 1: Experiencing Communication, 2014
Advances in Parapsychological Research, edited by Stanley Krippner, Julie Beischel, *et al*.
Investigating Mediums: A Windbridge Institute Collection, 2015

Web Sites

Links to download research papers including the EEG and qual/quant phenomenology paper: http://www.windbridge.org/education/peer-reviewed/

After-death Communication (Meaningful Messages) cards: http://bit.ly/WindbridgeCards

James Carpenter, Ph.D.

First Sight: A Theory of Psi

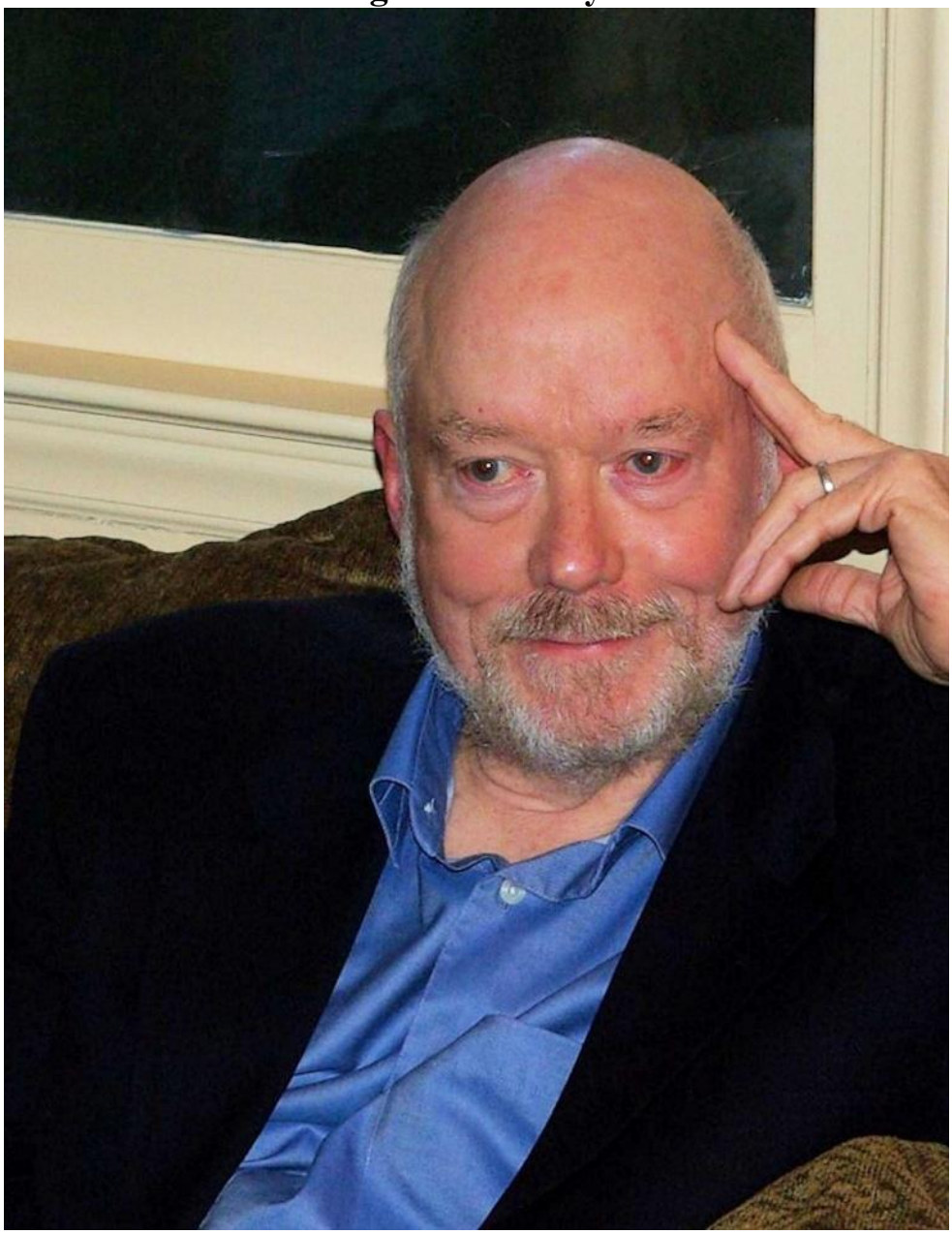

Photo by Jim Wells

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What emotional states encourage or discourage access to psi information? What does the author mean by First Sight?

What practices does Dr. Carpenter use to stay connected with higher guidance?

How does the author criticize current psychiatry's approach to mental illness?

I was born January 24, 1941, in McAllen, Texas, a border town, the second of two siblings. *Aquarians are often future thinking, progressive, and hard to pin down.* I've always felt a certain affinity with that. I'm curious and interested in things that other people often don't seem to find that interesting. My early years were spent moving around. We lived in a number of different places and my memories of all that are spotty and blurry. My sense of childhood place is Las Vegas, New Mexico, a little town east of Santa Fe, a unique and wonderful place to grow up. *I can imagine roaming the hills and exploring the desert.* Yes, I spent a lot of time in the mountains and nearby ranches as a kid. I lived in town, but I had friends with ranches. I was active in scouting, camping, hunting and spent a lot of time outdoors.

On the Myers Briggs, I'm INF/TP. My thinking and feeling functions are very balanced, the others are pretty extreme. *As a P did you have to struggle with graduate school deadlines and structures because P's don't like to be boxed into that kind of rigidity?* Yes, it's always been a challenge and a work in progress for me, dealing with order, organization, and structure. I've gotten better over the years because I've worked on it so darn hard. It's easier now than it has ever been. *When you're counseling couples, do you give them a personality inventory like the Myers-Briggs, so they understand each other better?* No, not usually. It's usually easy to see how people function in those terms and if it seems to present some problems, I might give them some feedback about what challenges and strengths their personal style implies and what they might need to work on to understand others and to communicate better.

I like the Myers-Briggs because it takes away any kind of judgment. It's not better to be a P or a J and I think that is very helpful. It's also useful

for parents to understand different types so they're not so frightened by differences in their children who happen to be a different temperament. I think the notion of temperament is very important, not just the dimensions stressed by Jung. A lot of things parents consider problems with children really turn out to be temperamental differences and if you can understand that it can really minimize conflict and guilt and help build mutual respect.

There are different dimensions that are often important. For example, some kids jump right into a group of strangers and find themselves in the middle, while other kids will linger around the edge for a long time and watch. They'll both end up finding ways to relate but they have different paces. Some kids are more anxious or less anxious; some are more active and some are more emotionally intense and some are placid. These are legitimate differences that we can pathologize, but it's much better when we don't. I am a clinician but I am not a fan of the medical model in psychiatry and not pathology-oriented. I tend to de-pathologize as often as I can.

It seems to me we pick our complementary, our opposite. For example, I'm very J and my son is very P, much more expressive and emotionally volatile. I think our spirits attract that difference when we need the balance. Yes, we tend to marry people who are going to challenge us in some ways to provoke us to grow if we possibly can. We're all just trying to grow. *How do you and your wife challenge each other? S*he is more emotionally intense and physically connected to her body in an emotional way. She is naturally athletic and a dancer, sculptor, and painter. She is embodied in a strong way while I am more likely to float off the ground into ideas and lose touch with my physical reality. I pull her out and she grounds me and we work out ways to be good for each other and of course we have vexed and confused each other sometimes. I think we'd agree that this has been good for both of us and it's been pretty smooth and satisfying for a long time now.

I have a monthly radio show and interviewed a couple who have been married for almost 50 years. They said sex is still a good way to smooth things over; so said the woman who was 89 with a twinkle in her eye. Oh, absolutely! I won't go into the details but I relate to that. We're going on 54 years so we've been in a great relationship for a long time. Intimacy is bonding and healing and enlivening. Certainly, in our case, all sides of the relationship get better and better. If you're with one person for a long time you can both change so much that it's almost as if you have had six

different marriages. If each one is growing and changing, the relationship will change over time. We are different in many ways from when we were kids and got married.

Tell us about your family's attitudes towards religion and spirituality that influenced your thinking. I know your mother had experiences with precognitive insights. Yes, my mother was the more spiritual of the two. She had experiences from time to time that were always very intriguing to me. They were both active in the Methodist church. I don't think it was ever quite as important to them as it was to me. I took to it early and had a mystical bent that seemed to come natural for me. Both of my parents liked and respected that. My mother read a lot of spiritually-oriented literature. She occasionally had visions that were really intriguing to me as a kid.

My parents' relationship was rather dysfunctional in a lot of ways and it wasn't very clear why certain things seemed to be so insoluble. That was a major mystery that I ended up pursuing my whole life. How do people tick? When they do not get along, why not? What do people really need from each other? These are questions that preoccupied me early on and later as a psychologist and a therapist.

Another mystery they gave me was my mother's "psychic" experiences. They intrigued me and puzzled me and made me skeptical. In high school I read J. B. Rhine's book *The Reach of the Mind* about parapsychology, I thought, wow, this is a scientific way you can find real answers. I've always been about equal measure skeptic and mystic. Those two things are somehow very blended in me and so I was very intrigued by the idea of parapsychology, which is both open-minded and rigorously skeptical, and this is the path I ended up pursuing. So, you can see I ended up pursuing *two* paths, clinical psychology and parapsychology. I've made a living as an academic psychologist and later as a therapist, but all along I worked away in parapsychology as well, first studying with Rhine and his colleagues at Duke, and then carrying out experiments, and finally, building a theory about it.

What's an example of your mystical bent when you were a child and your mother's insights? I have memories as a small child when we lived in El Paso, walking around in the desert and talking to God. God didn't exactly talk back but I had the strong sense that God was listening and this seemed real and somehow very comforting. When people in church would talk about God it seemed reasonable enough to me (even if sometimes more

abstract and judgmental than I felt necessary) but I moved away from that faith later when I got more educated and all my smart friends were totally skeptical. In college, I read a fair amount of existential theology, some of which de-mythologizes religious experience, so I wasn't sure just how to take my personal experiences.

One example of my mother's experiences was a time when I was in second grade in El Paso. My father was out of work and I guess our straits were pretty desperate, although I couldn't understand all that as a child. My mother had an experience when she was exhausted one day and collapsed on her chair. When she opened her eyes, I guess she hallucinated, and in front of her was this man in a business suit who looked like Santa Claus, who said, "Don't worry, you're going to be all right. You are going to be moving to a town that is two towns divided by a river that has no water," and then he disappeared. For some reason, my mother was very comforted by this nonsensical stuff in this somewhat crazy vision.

A few weeks later my dad found a good job in Las Vegas, so we moved there. Later, they remembered the vision because the town was two separate municipalities divided by the Gallinas River, which almost never has water in it. It was a town that was two towns divided by a river with no water. Sometimes her visions would be like riddles and unfold themselves later.

What happened when you went away from the spiritual focus and what triggered your renewed interest? About how old were you when you had your dark night of the soul when you were depressed for no clear reason? I was in my late 40s. I've never been a heavy drinker but I was drinking some, too, and that wasn't good for me or anybody else. I was a little confused about where my life was going in terms of my career. I'd been a college professor for a number of years at the University of North Carolina and then left. That was good in some ways because it let me focus clinically, which was natural for me. It also let me focus my research time on my burning interest in parapsychology, which was the thing I really cared most about research-wise.

Earlier I had been studying interpersonal perception and self-disclosure and that was very interesting but didn't feel as important to me as parapsychology. In my academic department, there had been criticism about my prior parapsychological work and constraints on it. After I left academics, I felt a little lost for a while after that and then it was great to

find a way to pull out of that. *It's a big shift in identity to leave academia where you're Professor Carpenter.* Yes, I loved research, teaching, and writing, and had tended to assume I would always be a college professor. However, the change turned out to be one of the best things that could've happened, but that's the kind of thing you only see in retrospect.

I lived with a low-grade depression and sometimes profound unhappiness. I felt like my life wasn't very fulfilling, I wasn't sure where I was going and sometimes I wasn't very good for my family or myself. I felt miserable enough that I decided to consider opening up to prayer again. One reason I'd gotten away from that is I spent a lot of years working in therapy with psychotic people and some of them spend way too much time talking to God who might tell them terrible things, which deepened my fear of indulging in that sort of experience. For some of the mass shooters, somebody in their head tells them to do terrible things. So, my therapy work with psychotic people made me leery of taking the idea of God too literally.

I thought I would try it as an experiment and if I found that it was hurting me in any way I would stop and if it didn't I would keep up a tentative prayer life. When I thought about it, it seemed to be helping. It deepened my life and my connection to other people. This side of my life has continued to grow and has made my life enormously better and made me more effective as a person.

A bridge for me was all the years I spent doing parapsychological research. I got lots of good results showing something like a non-sensory connection between people and the world, and with each other. I did experiments to look for evidence of ESP or psychokinesis (PK). I found interesting relationships between their performance and influences like their states of mind or motivations. For example, things the subjects indicated were important or especially anxiety-producing for them affected how well they performed in certain kinds of tasks, or with certain kinds of targets, in ways that were nicely predictable and sensible. I've had a lot of luck with research, great findings that kept happening and seemed to be really meaningful.

In one of the studies, I was also a subject. We had a group of friends that met weekly as a leaderless support group or encounter group. We talked about whatever we wanted to talk about with each other to develop our relationships. While we were meeting, a computer randomly selected a picture as a target—one of four pictures in one of 100 envelopes. At the end

of our session, we got a phone call that gave us the number of an envelope. Every envelope had four pictures so we would lay them out and vote on which of the pictures most resembled the session we just had. If that picture had been some kind of implicit prime for our session, which would've been the best match?

We found we could pick the correct picture over and over again, without any normal knowledge of which it was. This was a different kind of ESP test. We weren't trying to "see" or guess a target, we were seeing if we might express some implicit awareness of the target by the spontaneous turns the development of our session might take (this approach was congruent with my First Sight theory, which I was in the process of developing).

Our success was so good that it freaked me out a little bit at first, partly because I was one of the ones who was most strongly producing these correspondences. That opened up a period of a couple of weeks in which I was more psychic myself in that I knew things that were going to happen. It was fascinating and a little disorienting, a bridge back to considering a spiritual path again. It was obvious that there is more to us than what we see on the surface. Clearly, there are more connections between us and a non-sensory level of reality than we ordinarily acknowledge. If that's true, it seemed to me to open up the possibility of something like a spiritual life being a real thing.

W*hat's an example of a picture that matched a conversation topic in your group?* We were working out of the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, J. B. Rhine's lab after he retired from Duke. It's worth noting that usually there was a good physical distance between the selection of the targets and the group. Random selection was done in Durham and the group was meeting in Chapel Hill. I've had a lot of experience with Gestalt Therapy and sometimes early on I would encourage Gestalt exercises in the group.

One of the members was kind of restless and very intense one day and didn't seem to know what he wanted to say as he paced around the room. I said to him, "Do something now!" He went and stood behind a bald-headed man, an older man he admired and patted his bald head. He didn't know why but it was meaningful, a fun and spontaneous act. The photo target that day featured a big bull charging around a china shop, being kind of reckless. The top of the bull's head was prominent, bald with a big X in the

middle of it. If we had to have a pictorial representation of this little dramatic moment that was perfect. We identified the target easily.

Another example is someone told a story that implied being bereft after a big loss. The target picture that day showed a house on a beach that had been gutted by a hurricane. If we had to have a pictorial representation of that session that was the perfect one. Our hit rate overall was strongly statistically significant. We found some interesting correlations too. We rated every session in terms of a number of qualities of the session. It turned out that when sessions were more intense and especially more conflicted, our scoring was just equal to chance. When sessions were more playful, more spontaneous, gentler, happier and lighter, we scored very well. So, the correlations we found were meaningful.

Do you have a meditation practice? I aim for an hour at the beginning of every day for a very quiet period in which I can clear out and get in touch with a higher, better order of things, get a sense of guidance. Sometimes I'll do Gestalt work. I might think of some troubled situation and imagine that person in a chair beside me and have a different dialogue and work it out in terms of that relationship. It can go in many directions but I just need an hour or half-hour of quiet time. Sometimes I'll fall back on my old TM training, and sometimes use mindfulness, but for me, it's usually more inwardly active. *Do you sit or walk?* I'd say it's 80% sitting and 20% walking.

I'm curious about your dissertation about mother-daughter communication. What did you find and why were you interested in that? I was very taken with the family communication theories of mental illness and psychopathology. The approach that most intrigued me was ideas about confirmation (affirming responsiveness) and self-disclosure in families that have a psychotic child. This approach has been largely dismissed in recent years because our guiding paradigms are now so medical and biological that all of the psychological factors in mental illness are mostly forgotten by most psychiatrists. I did a study of normal girls and mothers communicating with each other and noted how confirming the mothers were in their responses and how revealing and honest the daughters were when the two of them were talking together. I related their communication to measures of personality and mental health and interpersonal perception.

What traits in the mother encouraged the daughter to be more disclosive? The results I got were actually rather mixed and confusing. It

might have led to a lot of good research questions to follow up, but my interests went elsewhere. In general, both mothers and daughters showed pretty stable tendencies to confirm or reveal, respectively, over different situations, but more confirmation led to more revealing, clearly, when they were talking in non-family pairs, but not within the family. I think that's because the highest levels of revealing on the girls' part often verged into topics that weren't very socially acceptable, and some of their mothers became embarrassed and tried to clamp down, which earned them low confirmation scores. It was for me what a dissertation is supposed to be—an exercise in how to do research and an enhancement of my appreciation of how difficult that is.

I've been doing research about global youth. The studies in the US show a major increase in teen anxiety and depression. Why do you think there's an increase in anxiety and depression, especially among teenage girls? I'm not sure of all the reasons, but I know it is so hard to figure out how to be a woman now. *You've got to be good-looking, sexy, get A's, great SATs, get into a good college in order to have a great career.* I don't know how they do it but they keep doing it. The developmental challenges for girls are so acute, and so complicated, and the world is so shifting. Day by day, things change and girls have so many challenges to figure out who they are, how they're going to relate, what they're going to care about and who they're going to connect to and in what way. I love working clinically with girls and women. I've always liked females even though understanding them has always been a challenge. I keep working on it; it's like organization, it's always a work in progress. The challenges for women are great now and I have much admiration for young women who are figuring these things out when it's so hard.

It would be interesting to study how, when teenage boys hit adolescence they back off from close friendships because they think it could be gay or weird. They're left isolated, as discussed by Niobe Way in her book Deep Secrets: Boy's Friendships and the Crisis of Connection. *Have you come across anything that allows a boy to be disclosive?* I think their family history is going to show itself later. How the family communicates affects how the child communicates. In general, there is a period when boys largely leave their family relationships and don't focus much on the skills of intimacy because their main task is shaping their individual identity. It doesn't exactly work this way normatively with girls.

Girls go through this too but most times boys will do that separation in adolescence more than girls tend to do. Boys may read *Catcher in the Rye* and identify with Holden Caulfield. This is a period boys go through as they try to figure out who they're going to be. They need to get somewhat away from people and when they find their way back to people—usually because they fall in love—they have to figure out how to relate again (which they don't know as much about as girls do by then), so it's a challenge.

Native Americans send the boys off to a vision quest so they go off by themselves in a ritual way. That's an important ritual and different cultural traditions have different ways of doing it. Unfortunately, some of our boys may get into drugs at that point with the romantic idea that if I trip out I'm going on a vision quest of some sort. I wish we had better rituals than the ones we have. A bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah is nice if the child is Jewish. Unfortunately, it's often each kid for himself or herself as the mass media give us rituals and kids pick those up and use them. They may become fans of a certain rock group and somehow use that as part of growing up. *Yes, their identity becomes their music choice—punk, emo or rap and so on.*

You've done over 80,000 therapy sessions. Do you see patterns in why people come to you? There are a lot of ways we can say the world is going to hell and be very despairing but I do think some good things are developing. Compared to when I was in my 20s and 30s, people are taking their relationships very seriously. They are taking on more responsibility for making them work instead of just flying off to be with somebody else. Now a lot of people whose parents were divorced know how hard divorce is on the family. When couples come to see me, they usually try to work really hard on the relationships. There is a depth of seriousness about it that is better than in the 1960s or '70s when people were getting set free from old ideas about marriage and often had some naïve ideas about how easy things would be without traditional structures, and how resilient children were. Unfortunately, this can give therapists a lot of work to do later.

When people come in individual therapy what are the themes? People are depressed or anxious. A lot of people come in now knowing their psychiatric diagnoses because they've seen psychiatrists and they're on some kind of medication. They'll give me their DSM label and tell me "I'm that." I often have to try to get under that and say, "Yes, but let us assume you have the disease of humanity and we'll see what's going on inside your

life." People need to talk and be understood or sometimes they need somebody to fight with. Therapy is full of tests, so the therapist tries to pass tests, tries to figure them out and pass them. It's pretty perennial as people have been seeing therapists, counselors, priests, wise uncles and aunts forever. *Freud called it projection, right? You project on your therapist and do transference.* Yes*,* you take your issues and put it on the therapist and hopefully, the therapist can help make something useful out of that.

You say mental illness is not a brain disease, it's not just a chemical balance (like Robert Alcorn). You criticize the over-simplification of "Okay, you're bipolar, so we'll give you lithium and that'll solve it."* I don't mean to diminish how desperately ill people can be. If you're depressed, you can be so ill that you die; it's a deadly, serious illness. I'm not saying there is no such thing as psychological illness. But I do think that if we try to reduce it to brain chemistry, we lose meaning in some important things. Why is someone so depressed? When did it start? What loss does it have to do with, what injury? What does anger have to do with it?

If someone is anxious, it's not just brain chemicals or bad conditioning. It has meaning, often mysterious meaning. Therapy tries to crack those mysteries open. I approach symptoms of mental illness as if they're meaningful rather than meaningless. If we reduce everything to biochemistry, this strongly implies that all these experiences are meaningless and that's tragic. If the person herself/himself can understand them compassionately, then you can work towards a deeper solution. You're going to be a lot more real and you'll be capable of more happiness when a situation in your life merits it.

If you live too much on antidepressants, for example, they tend to put your emotional life inside a narrow band so that you never feel too much in any direction. We've all inherited a nervous system that is exquisitely attuned to change. We are capable of reacting with excitement when there's something to be excited about, reacting with pain and anguish when there is some tragedy, or fighting when there's an attack. When you confine emotional response to a narrow band you take away emotional flexibility and this can lead a person to kind of drift through life. It can lead to a lack of responsiveness that if you look at the whole life span isn't so terrific for a person.

In one of your articles, you made a connection between ESP and anxiety. What's the correlation? It's negative. I draw this mostly from the

research, but I see it in everyday life, too; it's very consistent and it's a major aspect of my theory of "First Sight." What happens when we're frightened is our band of attention shrinks so the way we respond to things gets very narrow. Our attention is highly selective. We only attend to what we're afraid of at that moment. The mind is automatically screening out everything else in the world. Since the ESP target is outside that X that I'm afraid of, it's among all those things that are ignored. People who are very anxious tend to score below chance on the ESP test. They actually reject this sort of distant information because they're so focused on their fear.

In your book, First Sight, *for which you're well-known, you say that the word* parapsychology *is really not accurate. We should get rid of the "para" because access to this external guidance can be very supportive and helpful. My thought, in terms of evolution, is people who had that kind of intuition were the ones who survived and passed on their genes.* I don't think there are some people who are more psychic than other people. I think it's an unconscious process that is happening all the time for all of us. That's why I called it First Sight although it's unconscious. I spell out the research about how the mind samples unconscious information. There are definite patterns that cut across a lot of lines of research.

Take my mother's vision of the man who looked like Santa Claus. She was too exhausted to be doing cognitive work, which, like anxiety, screens out unconscious material. Cognitive work focuses on a topic and then we don't make use of unconscious material, as we see in perception and creativity research. My mother urgently needed to know if there was any reason to have hope for the future and the only place she could find any response to that concern was outside of her sensory domain. There's a pool of potential knowledge that is bigger than us and we can't really characterize it because it's unconscious. She believed her vision was friendly. This lovely incredible source of information gave her the riddle that was very comforting and told her about the future. Some important ingredients converged and I think that can be the case for anyone. She strongly needed some information that wasn't normally available, no cognitive work going on, and she was used to being open to unconscious kinds of information.

Back to "para." First Sight assumes that psi is not primarily a curious set of anomalous experiences that pop up once in a while, although that is what we see of it. It is actually an unconscious, ongoing connection to a

very expanded world that is happening all the time, and we are constantly using, unconsciously and implicitly, as we form every perception we have and carry out every action we do. People will tend to be more obviously psychic (more anomalous experiences popping-up) when they are interested in this level of experience and are temperamentally and habitually open to it. They consult it more and tend to take it more seriously.

These kinds of contingencies pop up in other people's lives too, but they're easy to forget and dismiss because they make no sense. It's like most people don't pay attention to their dreams because they seem so stupid that they immediately forget them. On the other hand, if you are used to getting interesting information from your dreams, you'll pay more attention to them. You'll write them down and when they correspond with the future you'll be more likely to notice it.

Do you think this source of information is neutral or, like your mother, do you think that it had a benign influence? Is it a field of information or spirit guides that are helping us through life? Like so much, it's what we make it to be. If we make the assumption that it is benign or even loving, that has different consequences than if we assume that it's just neutral. The universe responds to what we project upon it. If we project a nasty universe full of danger and mean forces, we'll have a lot of bad experiences. We'll tend to get back what we project out. I don't know how literally to take the idea of spirit guides. I have friends who take them very literally and find that idea to be helpful for themselves. I think a lot of the popular ideas about psi and quantum mechanics are actually pretty naïve and vague. I do know some serious physicists who are thinking a lot about this area and it will be very interesting to see what they come up with.

You were the head of the Rhine Research Center and did a lot of experiments there. What are some of the experiments that convinced you that we are the recipients of an unconscious information download? There are so many experiments I wouldn't know where to start. Parapsychology research, in general, is a bizarrely well-kept secret in science. For example, the research on personality and ESP and their relationship with anxiety, extroversion, and creativity. It's astonishing how much good work has been done and how little it's known; there's a huge blind spot in our scientific culture about this field.

I've been puzzled by this ever since I was an undergraduate and spent time in the Psychology Department where I was told there is nothing to

parapsychology. Then I would spend time in Rhine's lab seeing people doing fascinating work getting really cool results, that would be replicated in New York, or London, or Paris. Then I'd go back to the Psychology Department and be told these people must be doing poor work or they are liars and cheats. However, I knew they were clearly doing very careful work and were deeply honest and self-critical.

It's been a bizarre conjunction to be an academic psychologist who is also informed about parapsychology. However, a lot of clinicians tend to be generally open to parapsychology. *Because they see it in their practice?* Yes, that, and they tend to be more open-minded people to begin with, as opposed to academics who tend to want to focus on mainstream questions in a very cautious way.

What is the experimental evidence that convinces you that we do have unconscious access to information coming in that can bleed in from the future like your mother's precognitive visions? A critical criterion in science is the importance of meaningfully replicating an experiment in other places, by other people. For example, the Ganzfeld work where you have two people who are separated from each other. One is watching a videotape, while in another room the other person is relaxed and free-associating talking into a microphone. This goes on for 20 minutes. Then the person who was free-associating tries to pick out the video clip that was the target, as opposed to three decoy video clips.

We have found that people can do this at a statistically significant rate over and over, in many different labs with many different subjects. I analyzed hundreds of these sessions where the free-associations were transcribed, in terms of content categories. I looked at anxiety, being open and in a harmonious state of mind, or doing a lot of cognitive analyses, etc. I found that when there were suggestions of anxiety people were less likely to hit the target. [*John Kruth* found anxious people adversely affected electronic devices.*]

When there were indications of a state of mind that was harmonious and had positive connections with other people, the participants tended to hit the target more often. Then I took a new sample of data from several other laboratories and different countries and found exactly the same patterns. This is why I've tried to develop the First Sight theory in an attempt to guide future research and to connect it to research going on in social psychology, cognitive psychology, and neuropsychology. That's

really why I want to drop ”para.” We and mainstream researchers are studying the same mind, and finding similar patterns, although the mainstream people don’t know that because they don’t know anything about scientific parapsychology.

What do you think about the Monroe Institute technique to induce psi phenomena by stimulation of the brain hemispheres with sound? Do you think we can teach people to be more open to downloading information? I don’t know of any scientifically validated methods of making people do that. It would be helpful to have more studies that would let us come to those conclusions. *I was trained in the Berkeley Psychic Institute tools when I went to classes in Chico for two nights a week for a year. The reader focuses on a symbol, like a rose, to keep the left brain busy as a way to keep the mind busy so you can access deeper information.* I don’t doubt that there is a lot of promise to that. I would like to see the funds and the time devoted to demonstrating that in a good series of controlled studies.

RVer Joe McMoneagle follows similar principles and does some wonderful teaching in his workshops. Louisa Rhine did an analysis a few years ago where she took all the person-hours that had accumulated in all the parapsychology studies ever done and they equaled the amount of research done in a major psychology department in a year. We have such a small group spread so thin, with so little money, but we’ve done an amazing amount of work.

Who do you look to for recent studies? I enjoy following many groups. For example, Chris Roe’s* work in the University of Northampton and Christine Simmonds-Moore* at West Georgia. *There is Gary Schwartz* at the University of Arizona and the University of Virginia’s Department of Perceptual Studies.* Yes, absolutely, and many others, such as the Rhine Center and the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

Do you have another book in the hopper? I’ve been working on a more popular version of my *First Sight* book that’s about half done. I’ve also been doing more non-parapsychological writing. I’ve got a book on early memories that is pretty much finished and looking for a publisher. It’s not parapsychology but it’s about how to find the meaning in marginal experiences. It’s mostly a very early memoir of all the memories I could find up to the age of seven. I wrote them somewhat poetically, without supplying context from my knowledge and constructions later. I talk about the importance of early memories in personal, psychological growth. It is an

important tool in developing our own wisdom and maturity as we get older.

I've always had different interests, perhaps all roughly connected with the questions of how people grow and find meaning psychologically, and how we are deeply related to each other, the world, and our inner, mysterious selves. I've always balanced psychological and parapsychological interests and I'm still writing in both fields.

What do you do for fun? Write! Spend time with my family, read, and write. I have a wonderful writing group that is probably one of the most fun things I do. *Have you published your fiction?* Yes, I've published some a long time ago. I have a couple of pieces out to some magazines now. I've been publishing poetry more than fiction, as well as essays pertinent to psychology and parapsychology.

When you're writing fiction do you find that you give yourself up to your characters? Yes, if you let them go they will go. *Do you think that comes from the same information field as paranormal information like channeling?* Yes, I think it does. In my book I talk about the conjunction, in that creative people generally are going to perform better on parapsychological research. You're tapping the same place and the same approach to meaning.

You tie memory to psi because they both come from the unconscious? Yes, but you need to divide memory up into two major parts. There is a huge literature on memory. It's the major preoccupation of experimental psychology about how learning works. I think long-term memory, which sits in the background, is the part of memory that functions a lot like psi. Short-term memory, what we call working memory, is a very different thing because it's an active cognitive process that focuses my attention right now. When working memory is going on, psi will be rejected. When I'm asked to access long-term memory, it's very much like opening a space inside in which some ESP information is popping in. You're listening; it's rather passive more than active in that way.

The research on ESP and memory seemed contradictory because a lot of positive correlations were reported as well as a lot of negative correlations. First Sight theory says that cognitive work will exclude psi and an open listening frame of mind will get better access to psi. All the negative correlations came from studies in which working memory was

studied, all the positive correlations were from studies in which long-term memory was studied.

So many people are discouraged and worried about the increasing number of autocrats and climate change. Are you optimistic or pessimistic? I've been reading Michelle Obama's memoir *Becoming*. It made me remember how deeply happy I was when Obama was elected. I tripped out, floating a foot up off the sidewalk for a few days. I got involved in college with sit-ins, civil rights demonstrations in North Carolina in the early '60s, and it was wonderful when Jim Crow actually came down. People were terrified and saying that the world was going to end when this changed and the world didn't end. We got rid of some horrible laws and people were treated a little more decently. Trump tried to undo what Obama did: He came in riding the wave of a reaction against Obama. Despite all our swings, we're evolving as a society; we're getting better at communicating and regarding each other in more humane ways. Development is rough but I think we're doing it.

Is there anything else you'd like to include in your chapter? I want to recommend my book *First Sight* as a guide to help develop the science of parapsychology, the main contribution I want to offer parapsychology at this point. It's written academically. For most readers, I'd suggest skipping chapter two until the end because it's especially dense. I wrote it that way on purpose as a statement of theory, but some people find it off-putting. If they skip that chapter, the rest is much more accessible and it's a good general introduction to the field of parapsychology. I'd love for people to make use of that book.

Book

First Sight: ESP and Parapsychology in Everyday Life, 2012

Dale E. Graff, M.S.

A Physicist Explores Remote Viewing and Dreams

Photo by Barbara A. Graff

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Why is Dale Graff, with a Master's in Physics, convinced that remote viewing is effective?

What's the procedure for remote viewing?

What's the point of remembering dreams and becoming a lucid dreamer?

What global factors are influencing the development of the non-materialistic paradigm?

I was born December 13, 1934, on a farm in eastern Pennsylvania, a rural area at the base of the Blue Mountains. *You're a Sagittarius. What's your Myers-Briggs personality type?* ENFP. *Did you have siblings?* Yes, a sister 1 ½ years younger and a sister 12 years older.

I was very premature, weighing approximately two pounds and was declared dead. The farm didn't have electricity and everything was manual. The difficulties I had as a child, including some serious physical problems, led to a survivor attitude. On the farm, I was close to nature and saw the cycles of life and death, clearly evident with farm animals. That motivated me to be as strong as possible, physically and mentally. Initially, I was very thin and small but ultimately I became part of my high school wrestling and tennis teams.

How did you read at night? In the summertime, the sunset dictated when we retired. In the wintertime, we had kerosene lights but only in the kitchen. *Did you have an outhouse?* Yes, that was one of the struggles of winter. *Did you bathe in a basin and sponge bath?* Yes, a basin and a tub with hot water heated on the stove. You splash around and get out and dress in a hurry.

What encouraged you to go to college and study engineering? My elementary school was a one-room country schoolhouse with one teacher for 8 grades. This teacher inspired me to read and explore the world around me. The books on Arctic exploration, literature, and math in our little library motivated my interest in science.

At the farm, I could feel I was with the explorers seeking answers to the mysteries of the natural world. I saw birds flying and wondered how they did that, which led to my interest in the science of flight—aerodynamics. During high school, I excelled in physics and mathematics, which gravitated me towards aerospace engineering and physics.

My interest in mind and consciousness originated from frequent dreams I experienced as a child. Some of these dreams seemed to present future events. A few of the dreams were lucid; I was aware of being in a dream. Babies normally have 50% of their dream time in the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) phase of sleep, but premature babies are around 80 to 90% in REM. One of my early dreams was similar to an out-of-body experience (OBE) looking at me from a distance. I couldn't talk to anybody about it because nobody could explain what that experience was other than it was fantasy, although much later I learned that this is not fantasy; it is a

valid experience. Many years later I began studying dreams and recording them in a dream journal. Dreams are like entering a portal into the deeper nature of consciousness.

Where did you go to university? I went to Pennsylvania State University for a BS degree in aerospace engineering and Drexel University for my Master's degree in physics. My professional career began as an aerospace engineer for the Glenn L. Martin Company in Baltimore, Maryland in an advanced design group for airplanes and missiles. These designs provided the technological foundation for the space shuttle program. I also worked on the Gemini space capsule program that placed two astronauts in earth orbit, a precursor to the Apollo moon mission program. I transitioned to a government position with the Foreign Technology Division (FTD) at Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) in Dayton, Ohio as an analyst assessing Soviet Union missile and airplane capabilities.

How did you get involved with Star Gate Remote Viewing (RV) and the Stanford research institute (SRI)? One of my assignments at FTD was to prepare trends and forecast studies for predicting Soviet missile developments in the next 5 to 10 years. This involved integrating all the technical intelligence data available, such as photography from satellites and from clandestine sources. During a review of classified Soviet research literature, I located reports on ESP research and I became very intrigued. I was aware of J.B. Rhine's ESP work at Duke University involving statistics based on a fixed set of five symbols. *He started that in the 1930s?* Yes, the 1940s was the heyday of that work.

I wrote a report on the Soviet ESP research and submitted it to the FTD Command. To my surprise, the FTD Commander asked me to continue reviewing the Soviet classified research for any other ESP data and to keep him informed of the findings. Shortly after, Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ of SRI visited FTD asking for funding support for their RV research. [*See Russel Targ.**] I had not even heard of the term "RV" at the time. The FTD Commander asked me to review the SRI proposal and if it should be funded. Results of the proposed research, if successful, would provide insight for evaluating the Soviet ESP research and could be potentially useful for Air Force operational and intelligence needs. I recommended that the proposal be accepted. I was assigned as contract manager of the SRI research contract, and that's how I became involved

with remote viewing and SRI. Onsite duties included reviewing ongoing research, evaluating the results, defining new research objectives, and participating in operational related projects.

I quickly saw the potential of RV for locating objects or people and prepared a document with a protocol for how to locate missing Air Force airplanes; a likely future operational need. I gave this search protocol to the FTD Command Section in the event that an Air Force plane might become missing. I had planned to search for individuals with RV talent in FTD and had contacted a few individuals who had good intuitive abilities, an attribute that should relate to RV potential. My interest in remote viewing became known within FTD. An Air Force woman contacted me, claiming to have RV talents. I set up a few remote viewing experiments for describing local area locations and she had accurate results.

Apparently, results of her success became known within FTD. An Air Force official invited me to a closed-door meeting. I was told, "We have a missing airplane. Do you think you and your remote viewing person can find it?" I showed him my search protocol and went through the procedure with him and the search team. They showed me a picture of the missing Tu-22 Soviet airplane but provided no information about the suspected location. I took this on as a task with quite a lot of apprehension. Later I went through the protocol with her and initiated a remote viewing session with the objective of finding the missing airplane remaining blind to the suspected location.

After about half an hour she produced a sketch with specific terrain features. I gave that sketch to the search team. They said, "Let's go again because we think you're on to something. See if you can provide more details." We did another session and with that data were able to extract coordinates of the airplane's location from the search team's topographic map of a large area in Africa. There was one place that really seemed to fit so we sent in the coordinates that we read off the map.

The in-country search team sent a helicopter to look in that area about 80 to 90 miles away from the suspected crash site. A native at the clearing in the jungle where the helicopter landed had already found the airplane and had a piece of aluminum in his hands. So even though we didn't go right to the airplane's exact location, we had directed the helicopter to within a mile of the actual crash site. The native had the proof that the airplane was there and then, of course, the team went into the aircraft and extracted what they

needed and got out of the country as quickly as they could. Had our information not gotten to them that day the team would have had to leave the country without the technology they wanted to extract from the airplane. The crashed bomber was totally concealed under jungle canopy.

It turned out to be a Soviet airplane owned by Libya. The pilot had defected and flown south until the plane ran out of fuel and crashed in the African jungle. The task for the intelligence committee was to locate the airplane and all the navigational gear. There was a team in-country already trying to do this but they couldn't find the airplane and we were their last resort.

Did you try RVing yourself? When I initially went to SRI in my role as a contract manager, Puthoff and Targ had me experience an RVing session to observe the protocol, learn about the RV process, and verify the experimental controls for scientific acceptance. I relaxed as best as I could, focused on perceiving any images and sketched them on a plain sheet of paper. Russ Targ was my RV session monitor and occasionally prompted with, "Describe the target." My sketches were accurate but I was not convinced that I had actually connected with the target. I insisted on another RV experiment the next day and this also had target site correspondences. I now believed that almost anyone could do this under the right circumstances and right motivation. I had a rich background of dream recall and working with dreams so I think I was already primed. I continued with my dream work and had a lot of precognitive material. I balanced my connection with the SRI work with my own independent research.

*What's the protocol? You seem to doodle and see what comes up? S*everal approaches for experiencing remote viewing have evolved over the years. Initially, you sit down, relax and sketch or write out whatever impression comes to mind. It may be a weak image, it may be a thought and you just put it on paper because that records the information. Sometimes it can be an image although later approaches for RV discourages that and recommends that you just go to the automatic response RV styles, which is sketching and keeping your conscious mind out of the way. Because I had frequent dream recall, it was easy for me to see images and sketch those that came to mind. Sometimes the images that I sketched seemed like daydreams or even ghostly images. One of the SRI remote viewers, Hella Hammid, an artist and photographer, sketched what she actually perceived. Since the early remote viewing research, some protocols have been

developed that are structured with a systematic process but the main thing is to not let your conscious mind interfere.

That seems to be the main problem in any kind of psi information retrieval: the analytical left-brain interferes. So what procedure was used to keep that analytical mind out of the picture? Write something on one part of the paper in a symbolic act to get your analytical mind distracted. Then relax and proceed with the structured protocol. It takes some practice to shift between this structured process and ideograms—a type of shorthand notation. They are stepping stones to get to the basic data. It's a process, back and forth, writing something out or having a symbol somewhere on the page that you go back to, maybe put your finger on it to reconnect with the target without consciously thinking about it. You do something to detract your thinking and then allow your conscious mind to produce the impulses and the sketches that ultimately become the RV data. Sometimes it takes pages and pages to get to a feeling that this is getting close. You may have lots of really weird looking lines, all kinds of symbols and scratches but there is a method to it.

You wrote an interesting article comparing the cave-dwelling drawings from the Paleolithic people that are similar to ideograms with those that show up in people's dreams or in the RV doodles. What do you think the connection is? Cave art could reinforce a connection with the subconscious mind because, at certain levels of our perceptual abilities, there are forms and shapes that seem to be fairly consistent over cultures. *Like Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious?* It may be that these are stepping stones into our psychic abilities like the ideograms that facilitate remote viewing.

I also think that cave dwellers used the drawings to reinforce their intent on the hunt: "This is the animal I want to catch, allow me to connect with the soul of that animal." In Native American beliefs, the hunter wants to connect with the soul of the animal before hunting it down. Probably a shaman is doing the painting in preparation for the hunting that followed. Graham Hancock has written a lot on the subject and goes into some similar ideas on cave art and the psychological aspect of the early hunting cultures.

The RVers were amazingly accurate and what I'm curious about is why the government stopped funding them even though such valuable information was retrieved. The Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and the USSR dissolved leading to a big push to reduce the Cold War projects. Our

project was always on the edge of being continued. The other factor, probably the more significant one, was our new Commander did not believe in the phenomenon no matter what results we had. I doubt if he ever even looked at any of our reports.

To move into your dream work that you've continued throughout your life, you said that it's possible to have precognition or prophecy if you access your dreams. When you start being open to dream recall, it does not take very long before you have a dream where you ask, "How could I know that?" and it turns out to be true. The second dream that I ever recorded in my official dream journal, which I began in 1970 after a traumatic experience during a Canadian river journey, related to an individual in my work area. The dream presented a serious physical situation and a specific hospital. Five days later, there he was, exactly as I saw in the dream.

How did that happen? I was curious about the future because my job was to anticipate the future activity in the Soviet Union and it carried over into my daily life. I was always thinking about what's around the corner while exploring in the Arctic and other areas of Canada, from a safety point of view. Working with many people in my workshops and seminars, I find that anyone can dream of the future if they focus on wanting to know what they may encounter the next day or the next week. It's just a matter of intention and desiring to have information about your potential futures.

I think it is a natural tendency to have precognitive dreams but we don't remember them unless we set a desire to work with our dreams and journal to record them. That interest alone will trigger the memory. It can be very trivial and most precognitive dreams go by unnoticed or quickly forgotten. My workshops focus on Uncovering Your Precognitive Abilities; Synchronicity; The Art of Dreaming; Remote Viewing and ESP; The Art of Psi: Remote Viewing and Precognitive Dreaming; Exploring Dreams-Enhancing Lives; and Enhancing perceptions: Awake and Dreaming.

When I kept a dream journal I found the key was not to get out of bed when I woke up, but ask, "What did I dream?" and imagine a video screen. Then the dream images would roll and then I'd remember one to three dreams and write them in my journal by the bed. If you want to remember the dream and you have trouble doing that, don't move and let it come into your mind. Review the dream several times focusing on the main aspects. Jotting a few notes on a paper during the night immediately after the dreams will jog memories of the dream.

I found it would take two or three months before I would understand the meaning of repeated symbols unique to my unconscious; they had to repeat before I got what they were telling me about what was going on in my psyche. When you first enter the dream world and begin recalling them, there may be a lot of symbolic material that may appear confusing. Sometimes symbols are indirect so that if they represent something troubling we have time to figure it out. For precognitive dreams, I find that there's very little symbolism involved as they're usually quite literal and very brief. People at 9/11 had quite a few realistic precognitive dreams. Repeated dreams are significant; they may present buried traumatic memories or are calling attention to an emerging serious physical situation.

I've read that the most common dreams are anxiety dreams, then wish-fulfillment dreams, then working out unconscious growth issues. When you begin dream work, there will be quite a bit of dream material that has to do with your own inner dynamics and issues that you haven't totally finished, like relationship issues, or you may have been suppressing some creative potential within you. I have artist friends who have extremely vivid dreams that they actually paint and musicians and writers tell me the same thing. Robert Louis Stevenson, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, had "dream drawings" that would act out the scenario and the "little people" in his dreams would help to write the story. When you study dreams you discover tendencies that you have buried and sometimes you pick up information that's helpful to get through the difficult times in your life. I have worked with people who had traumatic situations during their childhood that would resurface in their dreams after they were mature enough to handle them in a healing and constructive way.

When there are precognitive dreams, what does that tell us about consciousness or time if we can receive information from the future? In terms of quantum physics is there any explanation for why we can do that? There are hints in quantum physics that indicate effects that are beyond space-time. Elementary particles seem to pop in and out of reality. We know about non-local phenomena where particles link together and retain that connection instantaneously no matter where they are. Our natural mental processes may also function at some quantum physical level, outside of space-time. Once you're outside of space-time, what are the ground rules? I look at it as information from the future, possibly in a retrocausal perspective with the future interacting with the present.

There may be something like a cosmic hologram, something that has information about the past, present, and potential future. [*See Jude Currivan.**] Edgar Cayce talks about the Akashic Records, the idea of a library in the sky. [*See Stephan Schwartz* and Henry Reed.**] It holds information that's beyond what we can possibly conceive of and not in this reality. The mind may also be outside of this reality with a facility in this outer region of the mind for accessing things that can be predicted in the future. That's where I think precognition comes in. The huge reservoir of knowledge in the cosmic mind has the ability to project and predict ahead in time and this is the part that we're picking up in our precognitive experiences. Precognition may appear to be about a fixed future but a cosmic probability principle may be continually adjusting the possible outcomes.

Some people would argue that there is no future, there is no past, it is all now. Everything is instantaneous now. There has to be some discrimination, some way of knowing what is potentially in the future as one of the many probabilities that are out there. We pick up one that might be the most likely and it happens but sometimes the most likely fades at the time we do the perception and so we're wrong. It wasn't that precognition didn't work; it's that we picked up the one that wasn't as probable as the one that crept in on the track to our rendezvous with the future.

You may know Larry Burk's work about dreams with breast cancer patients. Yes, I've had many good conversations with him at conferences and at the Rhine Research Center in Durham. *It would be great if physicians would take those dreams seriously. It could be a useful diagnostic tool.* Yes, I have friends in Toronto, Canada who employ sensitives who are very good at dream diagnostics with patients in their clinic. They have a good track record and the medical person in charge has the option of the type of treatment. A friend of mine from Boulder, Colorado had a recurring dream of being stabbed in the neck with a sharp needle and went to a doctor, who couldn't find anything wrong, but the dream kept repeating and finally the doctors discovered a beginning cancer.

In Toronto, are the sensitives medical intuitives or do they only work with dreams? The one I'm thinking about relies mostly on dream work. I don't really separate between dream intuition and ordinary intuition because ultimately intuition is in the subconscious mind the same as dreams. *Do those sensitives interpret the dreams of the patients or do they dream for the*

patients? The ones I'm thinking about dream for the patient as agreed with the doctor and the patient. I advocate having individuals dream themselves to be their own person to diagnose but many times the individual is resistant to this happening or too fearful of what the dream might reveal.

You may know Henry Reed's work where a group will dream for a person who has an issue and the whole group will dream and report back on their dreams the next day to help them.* I was involved in some of Henry Reed's dream helper ceremonies and I've done my own dream helper ceremonies when I do my dream workshops. People are skeptical but by the time we're through with the exercise they can accept the procedure due to accurate material that results from the dream helper protocol.

You've written Tracks in the Psychic Wilderness *and* River Dreams, *mostly about dreams?* The first book is a mixture of RV, synchronicity, and dreams and the second book is about some practical issues we encountered in real RV operational tasks with an underlying dream theme. In the first book, I recommend approaches for RV and precognitive dream recall. I included synchronicity because then you don't have to do anything but anticipate that interesting things will happen. It's a form of precognition that we don't remember. [*See Gary Schwartz.**] A psychologist would argue it's like Deja Vu in that you had the memory and then a second later you forgot it, but it's not like that because in synchronicity the experiences are too incredibly startling to say that that was a faulty memory. I hope one day that psychologists will change their definition of Deja Vu because I think that it is connected with synchronicity, precognition, and psi perception.

What's an example of a synchronicitous experience that you've had? I had quite a few. Some years ago, I searched to find the roots to my mother's side of the family in Wales. In 1848 a great-great-grandfather left Wales for the US and 1898 was the last contact we had with that side of the family. I had one old letter with a location name at the top that we couldn't locate anywhere in the Welsh maps. I was in London on a business trip and my wife joined me. I said, "This is the week we're going to find my long lost relatives."

We traveled throughout Wales searching for names that were in that old letter. After going through several different courthouse records, we ended up at one small courthouse on the Isle of Anglesey, going through the microfiche and didn't find anything useful. The clerk seeing our distress said, "We have one more box of records that was just released for foreigners

that is 100 or more years old." Near the end of the files, we found the names of my distant relatives with a connection to a location, Pen-Y-Berth!

The clerk looked at that name and said, "As a child, I remember being on a hill with a place that had a name like that," and gave us the directions. We found the remains of an old stone cottage, just a stone pile at the end of the road. A woman came out of the new house next to it, and I said, "I'm looking for my long lost relative, Thomas Roberts." She said, "Come in and meet your uncle." Think about the timing: our last day in Wales, the last box of microfilm, the clerk who knew the name of that house and where it was located. In Wales you don't have house numbers; just the name of the house. I consider finding my long lost relatives a synchronicity.

Sometimes in your workshops, you talk about UFO experiences. What do you think about UFOs and aliens, extraterrestrials? This comes up a lot. My view is kind of neutral about what the experience is. Since I have a lot of experience in lucid dreaming, I'm inclined to see a number of the reports that I look at as possibly lucid dream types of experiences, or something similar, but not as literal events. They could have been symbols from the subconscious, like archetypes or they could represent extraterrestrial communications in symbolic forms. I have not had any UFO type experiences as people describe other than perceiving mandala or disc shapes in dreams that were symbolic of an inner dynamic like a Kundalini experience. Gopi Krishna wrote *Higher Consciousness,* years ago, which helped explain some of my own dream experiences of mandalas and cobras.

At the time I didn't realize those two symbols were a direct connection to Kundalini, described by Gopi Krishna as the opening up of chakras and becoming more aware of your total psychic nature. That happened to me, although coming in from the dream side, it was not as ferocious or energetic as when these kundalini experiences occur spontaneously. These experiences can be difficult to understand and hard to deal with. Spiritual crisis groups help people understand these powerful experiences that seem like being electrocuted or having intense physical vibrational sensations. Shamanic literature also discusses these energies.

For some people, the rising Kundalini from the base of the spine up to the crown chakra feels like a mental illness. It's really very disturbing rather than a blissful or an enlightenment experience. Lee Sannella, M.D., wrote one of the first good books on the Kundalini experiences from the medical point of view of the physiological situation. Some medical

professionals acknowledge some kind of psychic opening, an energetic phenomenon, rather than a psychosis. Icelandic fever is known to occur when people are isolated a long time in darkness: Sometimes intense energetic experiences erupt spontaneously and look very much like a Kundalini event, so there's something in the physiology that is real. Asian traditions provide valuable insight on the experiences and have practices for controlling the energy.

Is there a technique to start doing lucid dreaming where you can change your dreams? Yes, there are several ways to have a lucid dream. You can go through a mental exercise to wake up while you're dreaming when you see a certain symbol. The one commonly used is whenever I have a hand show up in my dream, that's a sign to me that I'm lucid dreaming. With this hand awareness, I can become aware of being in the dream. Another method is simply to lie motionless in bed and imagine that you are becoming more relaxed and falling deeper into the sleeplike state and then desiring to become aware of whatever the next stage of your perceptions will be. This can also lead to an OBE, which has a correlation to lucid dreaming; only it's more literal and realistic in its content.

I began lucid dreaming when I was quite young. I was curious about what happens when we fall asleep and decided one night to lie in bed and trick myself and say, "I'm not going to fall asleep; I want to see what's going to happen when I fall asleep." I could lie in bed and decide to keep hold of consciousness and become aware of the dream right away. That technique is part of the dream yoga tradition from Tibet, as I found out decades later. Dream yoga practitioners hold onto consciousness while going to sleep and end up in a dream-like situation, aware of being in a dream. The International Association of the Study of Dreams (IASD) provides some excellent material on how to achieve lucidity in a dream.

It seems to me that the new paradigm that's being developed by people like you emphasizes consciousness. Do you think that there is a new non-materialist paradigm being created? Yes, particularly as presented by organizations like the Society for Scientific Exploration and the Institute of Noetic Sciences. The irrational critics are fading away since this concept is gradually being accepted. People are interested in this topic at the grassroots level. What is helping this new paradigm shift is a gradual acceptance of the duality of life—both material and non-material aspects co-exist and interact. There is also a trend toward a global sense of

interaction demonstrated by the Internet. This instant communication ability opens up acceptance of how consciousness and a collective consciousness (global consciousness) may exist and interact. As evidence accumulates from research and increasing experiences with precognition, remote viewing, synchronicity, and other psi effects it is becoming evident that consciousness, or an aspect of it, exists outside of space-time. This awareness is at the forefront of a non-materialistic paradigm shift. Consciousness is everywhere, not only in our brain but in a global mind.

You talk about a revolution in consciousness beginning with young people in the 1960s who integrated East and West inner exploration in the human potential movement, so would you add that to the influences on the new paradigm? Absolutely. I think that movement created many changes in society with being open to the Eastern religions or Eastern philosophies and their concept of consciousness. Physicist David Bohm's concept of the Implicate and Explicate Order suggests that reality shifts between levels of existence. These terms seem scientific but the basic concept has roots in the Eastern traditions.

Is it fair to say that consciousness equals mind or how do you define consciousness? It's a slippery word. Most people think when I'm awake and not asleep then I'm conscious. The way consciousness has been used is the all-encompassing including the unconscious. I see consciousness as the combination of awake consciousness, subconsciousness, and unconsciousness. At some level, we're conscious even though it's delayed or we won't know about it until we remember a dream or something like that. So I think consciousness relates to a global mind. This implies the totality of psychic being, of mental abilities, the totality of our awareness and consciousness.

You say there are methods to evaluate psi experiences and the issue of comparisons. Could you discuss that? The methods of evaluating any experience, particularly those with the phenomena we're talking about, is making sure you record the experiences and keep a record of what was correct and what was not correct. Initial remote viewing relied heavily on sketching the perceptions. How well did this sketch correlate with the intended physical appearance of the area that we were hoping to describe? A scientific approach based on statistics requires a large database of many experiments. One evaluation method is to compare the data to several target

possibilities chosen randomly. Deviations from chance expectation can be calculated to determine if a psi effect may have occurred.

Statistical appraisals are important but you may want to determine how well or accurately the psi data correlated with the target or objective. Evaluation scales such as 0-10 can be used for assessing each relevant target element according to sensory effects such as visual appearances, sound, emotion, and spatial relationships. A remote viewer may accurately sketch features at a distant location but not perceive the feature's significance of meaning. Psi experienced in dreams is usually presented in a context familiar to the dreamer. Precognitive dreams are usually literal and brief.

I wanted to ask a few questions about you. What do you do for fun? My fun is enjoying canoeing in the wilderness. Some of the books I read as a youth were so inspiring, I said, "I gotta go into the North Woods to repeat the path of the voyagers." Some of the canoe trips that I have taken in Canada are 400 miles long. If I'm not in a canoe in Canada then I'm hiking in the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia or on the Appalachian Trail which is right within a stone's throw of where I live here in Eastern Pennsylvania. Sometimes I shift and join the duplicate bridge club.

When were the most difficult time in your life and how did you cope? My most difficult times were physical problems as a child. I coped by developing a survivor instinct and seeking books that described strength and exploration. There were some poems in the school library that were very inspiring. I would recite these poems as I walked among nature and imagined myself on faraway journeys. I felt a kinship with ancient travelers and the Native Americans that had lived in my area, as they survived many hardships with their natural instincts. I developed a sense of inner strength and introspection. Later on in my career, when I became more visible in my interests in dream work and remote viewing, I had to develop strategies for how to deal with the difficult situations and critics of these interests.

What about family? Barbara and I are married more than 50 years. She's really supportive and from a medical background; keeping me focused on the logical aspect. We've had discussions on the topics and she acknowledges many benefits. One instance was actually life-saving. It was a traumatic situation that happened in the surf of Hawaii. We were there for almost two years during the Vietnam period when I was a civilian physicist with the Air Force. I was doing systems analysis and area defense analysis

work. We lived on the Kailua side of the Pali Mountain and took many opportunities to enjoy the beach and water. She can't swim and I was able to bring her back.

She was wading when the riptide caught her and was swept out to sea when I had no idea she was in the water. She was unable to call for help. I was in the surf some distance from her and felt the urge to turn around and go toward the open ocean. I was drawn to where she was floundering in the high waves. I became exhausted pulling both of us back to shore. Suddenly, I experienced a shift in perspective as if I was above the two of us. This new awareness seemed like an OBE experience as I watched the two of us in the high waves. From this perspective, I had new energy to reach the shore.

Do you have children? We have a daughter and family living in Florida and a son and family living in Hong Kong. They know of my interests and we have many interesting family discussions.

In the face of climate change and increasing numbers of autocrats and growing world inequality, are you an optimist or a pessimist about our survival as a species? I tend to be an optimistic person. So maybe I'm biased and, of course, there will be cycles of bad times with recovery times shifting around with different countries and political leaders. Streams of consciousness are interacting that will impact things for the better or worse so we will have declines and inclines.

I believe we will get through the difficult times but I don't perceive difficult times as ever disappearing, due to the nature of humans. I am not an overly optimistic New Age person; but I think that, eventually, a global constructive convergence will occur. I remember when the Berlin Wall came down. Who could have expected that to happen? One particular remote viewer, Ingo Swann, did predict that. In 1988, he said, "In another year that wall will be down."

Is there anything else that you would like to include in your chapter? I feel if you make a good connection with the natural world we are better prepared for whatever unfolds. We have an innate ability to attune with nature that provides a link to a global consciousness field. So whenever things are difficult, we should retreat to a natural place and then re-tune and avoid distractions. Connection with nature is important to maintain psychological balance and perspective. Also, be open and take time to read motivating literature and poetry, and listen to music.

My number one interest has been not just improving me but other people through workshops, writings, and presentations. I encourage individuals to begin exploring their inner landscape to uncover hidden talents, explore benefits of intuition, psi, and precognitive dreaming and to enter the global collective essence. Being aware of our subconscious interconnectivity is important for our future evolution.

Books

Tracks in the Psychic Wilderness, 1998
River Dreams, 2000

Diane Hennacy-Powell, M.D.

A Psychiatrist Researches Extrasensory Perception

Photo by Jay Barry

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

How does Dr. Hennacy-Powell define reality and consciousness? How does this tie in with synchronicities? With our brains?

What sparked her research on ESP? Who is more likely to have these experiences?

As an M.D., what's her critique of the medical system?

I was born in Ohio in October 1955. *A Libra. Do you know your Myers-Briggs or your Enneagram types?* I don't really fit into any type easily, but am a recovering perfectionist, an artist, and a peacemaker. When I was a teenager, I learned how to sew and design clothes. I do interior design, paint, sculpt, and have remodeled and restored five houses. I was a member of the New England Quilter's Guild and have made several quilts by hand. I also dance. I come from a long line of musicians, am related to several jazz musicians, and started dancing as a child—tap dance when I was four. I developed an interest in jazz at a young age and still do some improvisational jazz dance.

You've done work in Russia, the UK, and Sweden as well as around the US. Do you find that there are differences in approaches if you are working in another country? Yes, absolutely, especially at the times I was there. I was in the Soviet Union in 1990, shortly after Westerners were first allowed in to teach psychotherapy. Their psychologists only knew behaviorism. When I was at Harvard, the training was still psychoanalytic. To my surprise, the residents discussed where to buy psychoanalytic couches. This sounded really funny to me as a Johns Hopkins-trained psychiatrist. My chairman, Paul McHugh, was a neurologist before becoming a psychiatrist, so we were extremely biological in orientation. Ultimately, I experienced training in psychotherapy and biology, and I believe the best approach is a combination.

You said you also come from a long line of scientists, like your father who had three graduate degrees, so you have both influences. Yes, and my mother was a polyglot, fluent in multiple languages, who wanted to be an interpreter for the United Nations. Her mother was fluent in three languages because she was born in Paris to an American Professor of Greek and Latin

who was doing his sabbatical at the Sorbonne. She had a German nanny, so from the beginning, she learned to speak French, English, and German.

What about the Quaker influence? Was that part of your spiritual upbringing when you were young? No, it wasn't, but it's true that I come from a long line of Quakers. My ancestors left England in the early 1600s; they joined the Quaker church very, very early and came to the US. My eighth great-grandmother was Elizabeth Fones and the book *The Winthrop Woman* was based upon her life. She was the niece of the first Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony and ran off with a Quaker named William Hallett, my eighth great-grandfather. This didn't go over well with the Puritans. A Native American slave had been given to Elizabeth by her uncle, but she didn't believe in slavery. When she left Massachusetts, she returned this woman to her homeland where her father was Chief. Out of gratitude, he granted Elizabeth land, until it was taken away from her by the government for being a woman who was too independent for that time period.

Elizabeth was also accused of being a witch because she understood herbal medicine. Her knowledge came from her father, who assisted Dr. William Harvey, the physician from Cambridge who first discovered the heart's role in the circulation of the blood in the 1600s. Elizabeth worked in her father's apothecary and knew a lot about herbal medicine. Her Native American "slave" also knew a lot about herbal medicine, and their combined esoteric knowledge healed people. That was enough to get you accused of being a witch back then.

Do you think there is some kind of ancestral memory or genetic imprint that impacts us? I wonder about it. When I read the story of my eighth great-grandmother, I could really relate to her as a person. She had worked with her father. Similarly, as a little girl, I was at the knee of my scientific father. He started out as a mathematician and ended up as a cardiovascular physiologist who was the Head of the Artificial Heart Program at Battelle Memorial Institute, which is why we ended up in Columbus, Ohio. I also went through a "witch trial" for being willing to stick my neck out and talk about controversial topics, such as ESP. My willingness to consider it as possible didn't go over very well with the medical establishment. They consider ESP to be impossible, and belief in it to be a sign of mental illness.

There's an old saying about when there's a scientific discovery, the first reaction is to ignore it, then it's ridiculed, and then it's accepted, and finally, it's "I thought of it." It seems like we are in the first stage in terms of psi/paranormal research and what the brain can do. I speak at various conferences and have seen opinions evolve over the years. I would say we've been stuck in the ignoring/ridiculing stage for most of my career. People who are 10 years older than me went to college when courses in ESP phenomena were offered at some places, but the funding for ESP research stopped before my time. I think we are moving towards acceptance of some of these phenomena now. Over the last couple of years, more and more people, including academicians, are coming forward. They are saying that they've had some of these experiences themselves, and now many think we need to change the paradigm. That's very, very exciting to me.

Research at the University of Wisconsin finding that the Tibetan monk's meditation changes their brain and research about the mindfulness meditation of Jon Kabat-Zinn's impact on health was an opener in terms of mind-body acceptance. I think the ones who first opened the conversation in a major way were the physicists who pointed out the parallels between quantum physics and wisdom traditions. Physics changed over a hundred years ago, but it hadn't impacted biology until more recently. Quantum physics changed how we think about an atom. Instead of being a solid ball, it's predominantly space. Subatomic particles can act either as a particle or as a wave, depending upon whether or not they are measured. This fact puts consciousness in the equation for our interaction with the physical world—right there in the forefront.

ESP has been recorded throughout history, across all cultures. Why is it so difficult to accept as possible? People are vested in the status quo. Some have made their career on the current paradigm and are not going to change their opinion. That is why there is a saying that "science advances one funeral at a time." Telepathy and precognition also scare many people. Perhaps they are afraid of someone being able to know what they are thinking. It also might be that acceptance would mean they have to look at life in a different way, or they don't know how to integrate it.

My experience is, for many people who've had precognition insights it was about something negative like someone was going to die and so they turn it off. That brings up a good point. How can we know whether or not a dream is precognitive or a bad nightmare? I have talked with people who've

experienced both of those. They say there is a qualitative difference, but most people wouldn't know how to discern. When it comes to precognition, its existence poses some challenges to our notion of free will. If you can predict the future, the future already co-exists. That implies we are moving along towards an inevitable fate. People like to think that they have more control over their lives than that.

I think that's too simplistic a way to think about precognition. You can have precognitive experiences, but that does not mean that everything is predetermined, not at all. *It's only set because of what we've done. It's cause and effect, which doesn't really undermine free will.* That's right. *It means that there are consequences for what we do and they bleed into the future; they impact the future because of cause and effect.* Right. It could happen instantaneously, but it also could take more than one lifetime to play out.

What led you to medical school rather than being a physicist? I wanted to understand human consciousness and didn't want to do research on animals. Also, while doing research as an undergraduate, my professors were pretty disillusioned about the funding for basic science. *What kind of approach did they emphasize when you were in grad school to be a psychoanalyst?* We studied the bio-psychosocial aspects of humans in my psychiatry residency, which is an integrative approach. While on faculty at Harvard, one of the perks was to have a psychoanalyst as your psychotherapy supervisor. I have a lot of respect for psychoanalysis, but it is becoming a lost art.

Psychiatry residencies are even starting to question whether or not psychotherapy should be part of their training. That would be a huge mistake. *It's just pharmaceuticals, pharmaceuticals, pharmaceuticals.* Due to cuts in spending for research, the pharmaceutical companies stepped in where everybody else stepped out, so it became increasingly pharmaceutical in orientation. This approach treats symptoms with a band-aid that oftentimes doesn't work. *And can create worse symptoms.* Exactly, it's a shame. I left academia because I really didn't like the direction that it was headed.

How did Harvard come to be interested in mind-body? When you were there, what was the interest in that field? Harvard was very psychoanalytic when I was there. Freud was wrong about a number of things, but he pointed out the connection between our unconscious and unexpressed feelings in our bodies. During his time period, more people

had conversion disorders than do today. Rather than feel their anger towards someone, such as their mother or father, they would instead lose their voices so they couldn't speak, or they'd lose their ability to move their arms.

I saw some of these patients in the emergency room. They had undergone a neurological workup in which nothing was found to be wrong with them. I'd sit down with them and ask, "What was going on at the time you had this onset of paralysis?" They inevitably described being in the middle of a conflict. I helped them to link this with the onset of the symptoms, which was often enough to restore them to normal.

The placebo effect is another great example of the mind-body connection. When you give someone a sugar pill to treat their illness, about 30% of people will get better just because you've given them a pill. *What amazes me is even if people know it's a placebo, if you give them a big red pill, it has more impact than like a smaller white pill.* That's true, although the meanings of colors differ from culture to culture.

Would you say that med school was the most challenging time of your life? The first two years of medical school were actually a highlight of my life because I learned so much and the professors were such amazing superstars, the top scientists. The six years after that were really pretty brutal because you basically have no life; you are hardly getting any sleep, and you have tremendous responsibility. I cope by rolling up my sleeves and work hard and push through things.

I've had other kinds of challenges throughout my life, starting at a very young age. I was different from other children because my life was so different. We moved frequently, across the country, at a time when people had very different ways of dressing and behaving depending upon where they lived. I was the new kid in school several times and had to learn to make friends despite being shy. By the time I was 12, I had had several brushes with death. I've had a lot of things to deal with, which have made me a better therapist. I had to go through my own process of healing and becoming whole. I also think my capacity to change my mind about how I see something is probably one of my biggest strengths, my ability to think out of the box and solve something by coming at it from a different angle.

When you had the NDEs, did you go through the tunnel with a beam of light, those kinds of typical blissful experiences? I nearly drowned when I was about 12 and had a life review where my whole life flashed in front of

me over a period of seconds. Time was compressed just like it is in dreaming. I also had a strange sense of resignation, thinking, "Oh well, I am going to die, and I know my mother is going to get upset." While mountain climbing with my father when I was only about four-and-a-half years old, I slipped right off the side of the cliff when the dirt underneath me started crumbling. My father didn't have any sense of protectiveness. He didn't hold my hand or have any rope, or anything attached to me. I was hanging off the side, after having fallen around 16 or 20 feet. I knew that I could have died, which had a huge impact on me.

When I was applying to medical school, I was hit by someone when I was crossing the street on a rainy day. I couldn't see her coming because of a row of parked cars on my side. The next thing I knew I was on a surgery floor after having been unconscious for several hours. The experience changed how I saw things in a way that I couldn't articulate, but I had the sense that there was more order in the world than I had thought before, even as a mathematician and scientist.

The night before, I was in a discussion with a woman who thought I should study math rather than medicine. She asked me, "How can you give away the gift that God gave you?" I said, "How did you get this far in math and believe in God?" My father was an atheist and everybody that I'd ever met as a scientist and a mathematician didn't believe in God. I ended our conversation with, "I wish I believed in God, but it's impossible to become a believer when that isn't how you were raised." The next day, after coming to on the neurosurgery floor, I wondered, "Could I now have this sort of belief?"

I read scriptures from various religions trying to find something that made sense to me. At first, I resonated with Buddhism because it talked about suffering and the way out of suffering is for us to accept life more for what it is. That made such perfect sense to me that that's where I began my journey. I looked for universal beliefs. I wanted to know what is it that everybody seems to agree on.

What would you say those beliefs are? There is an afterlife, there is a creator, cause and effect? There is agreement on certain principles by which we should be living. For example, we should try to imbibe Buddhahood, become Christ-like, or have a nonjudgmental, loving way of being in the world. Whether there is a heaven and a hell would be hard to say—I think that we can't ever really know for sure until we are on the other side—but I

can tell you for sure that there is a heaven and a hell while we are still alive that people create by their belief systems and their actions.

People like Eben Alexander, Edgar Cayce, and Robert Monroe traveled to those other dimensions, which some people would call heaven or hell. So some people have mapped what happens on the other side.* Perhaps heaven and hell exist in other dimensions. The idea that we live in a multidimensional universe comes out of string theory. As a little girl, I read the book *Flatland* about a two-dimensional world and what it would look like if something three-dimensional entered your two-dimensional world.

The ancients said what we perceive as reality is an illusion. Once you realize that our "reality" is a construct of our mind, just as dreaming is a construct of our mind, then you can start to play with it and all sorts of things can happen—things that people might call magic. I've had so many magical things happen. I have periods of time in which the synchronicities are so profoundly off the charts that I wonder how could this possibly be? I've had a lot of synchronicities with ravens and wolves. A friend doing work with a Native American medicine woman said I should look up what raven means. Some people say raven is a shape-shifter and ravens are one of the most intelligent species on the planet. My friend said, "Go inwards, do a vision." I was never somebody who did that kind of thing, but I thought, "I'll try this."

I meditated and I saw this image in my mind of a Native American. I went to a book about Native Americans and found the woman dressed as I saw in meditation. She was a female shaman in the Pacific Northwest. At the moment that I was reading, "When shamans are initiated in this tribe, they are always accompanied by ravens and wolves," I heard two ravens in my backyard cawing, and right between them, was a wolf. I thought, "Wow, that's incredible."

At that same time in my life, I was doing research on my ancestry. A woman who had received my inquiry letter called me and said, "You really need to talk with Laurel Gabel, because she did extensive genealogy research on your family." At the very moment she said that, a lightning bolt lit up the sky and my dog barked. A raven was on the other side of my glass door. To top it off, my other phone line rang at the same time. It was Laurel Gabel. When I visited her, I discovered that my family name, "Fitz

Randolph," is an old Viking name that means "son of raven-wolf." Synchronicities? I could go on and on.

Do you think it's a past-life influence or do you think it's your higher guidance saying, "We want to send you in this direction of doing modern-day shamanic work?" Interestingly enough, I've recently been made an honorary member of a Native American tribe and I am being trained in Native American medicine. It's something that just happened organically, it wasn't something that I pursued. I also think messages come in a variety of forms. Some can feel almost like a wink, saying to you, "We are glad you are checking out the ancestors here." The Native Americans believe that your ancestors are with you, especially when you go to ceremony. It's extremely important to them to know who their ancestors are.

Did this propel you into doing shaman-like healing work? I started to read more about shamanism and discovered that in many ways, my path has been like that of a shaman. The trials and tribulations that I've gone through, the mystical experiences, these are the kinds of things reported to happen to someone who is in the process of becoming one. I have also helped many people heal, but that could just be me being a good doctor.

Do you think that there are guides who are helping you or that the Akashic Records of universal information guide you? Do you have a sense of who is directing these messages to you from the other dimensions? No, I don't. I stay pretty grounded. I don't ever see any visions. When I talk about an image, it's in my mind.

How did you get started on the ESP research? What triggered that? When I was at Harvard, I was the senior clinician to see patients on medical floors who were thought to have a psychiatric condition by the house staff. A typical reason to ask me to come would be a conversion disorder. If they had done a complete evaluation and thought that the person didn't really have a physical basis behind their illness, then I was called in. Another reason was if they thought someone was insane. One day they had a patient who was claiming to see ghosts and to be psychic. She wanted to leave against medical advice because she knew the tests would come back normal, that is, blood tests for a suspected heart attack.

As we talked, she started to say things like, "You have this aura that looks a lot like Christ. I am getting all this information about you, do you mind if I share?" I said, "Sure go ahead." She said, "You are married to a chemist," which was true, I was married to a fellow classmate of mine from

medical school who did an M.D. and a Ph.D. in biochemistry. That very week, he was applying for a post-doc in biochemistry at Johns Hopkins and at UCSD. She had no way of knowing this. She continued, "He is applying for a job in two different cities." Shocked, I asked, "Which cities?" She replied, "Name some and I'll tell you." I gave her ten cities, and she said, "You are going to move to San Diego, but in his heart of hearts he wants to go back to the other city." I knew this was true. My husband did want to go back to Baltimore since he was a 13th generation Baltimorean.

She was right about her tests coming back normal and we moved to San Diego several months later. Her other predictions about the future came true. I was impressed, and thought, if this stuff is real, if people really can tell you what the future is going to be, then we need to be able to account for that in our models. Why do some people have these abilities, and others don't? What is different about the way their brains are wired?

Are there differences that you can measure in the brains of people who are psychic? ESP is more common in very young children than in middle-aged adults. Why is that? It could be because the frontal lobes of young children are not as fully attached to the rest of their brain as they are in adults. This is one of the reasons young children have poorer impulse control, why they are so in the moment, and why they don't think about consequences. Those are all frontal lobe functions. The frontal lobes can also "talk us out of" believing in certain things. People with ADD do not have their frontal lobes as fully engaged with the rest of their brains and they also report more psychic abilities than those without ADD.

Women report ESP experiences more than men. Women tend to have a different lateralization of their brains from men. In women, language is encoded in both the left and the right hemisphere, whereas in men it tends to be more in the left-hemisphere. Of course, I am talking about your average right-handed person, and there are exceptions. In general, the right hemisphere is associated with being more intuitive and the left hemisphere with being more analytical. The right hemisphere is more involved with processing emotions, as in "the artistic temperament," and ESP is reported more commonly in artists.

People who otherwise wouldn't consider themselves psychic can have a precognitive dream, for example, or a telepathic dream where they are dreaming that something happened to someone they love on the other side of the world at the time that it happened. When we are dreaming, the right

hemisphere is more active than the left hemisphere, and the back of the brain is more active than the front of the brain. It's a reverse of how we are when we're awake. It's very much the opposite of the brain activity of an analytical scientist, so they are the least likely to experience ESP, and not surprisingly, the ones who say these things are impossible.

On what grounds did scientists dismiss your ESP research? Actually, the scientific establishment has not dismissed my findings. I run into problems when people judge my book by its cover. They see the title, *The ESP Enigma*, and that I believe a scientific case could be made for it—then they dismiss me by saying, that's impossible. But, when they have taken the time to read my book, a lot of them have responded, "You're right. That makes sense."

It seems to me that a way we can explain clairvoyance and telepathy and other psi phenomena is accessing the quantum information field because we know that the quantum field is informational. Does that make sense to you? It makes sense to me, but a lot of people get lost in the jargon; they hear the words "quantum informational field" and don't know what that means. Also, scientists cringe when they hear words that have a very precise meaning for them being applied to something else. *Entanglement and quantum non-locality indicate scientific evidence of the connection between closely related particles that influence each other, evidence of this information field.* There's a lot of different ways to think about non-locality. I think that non-locality can be explained by multi-dimensions. If you have 11 dimensions, the two particles might appear separate from one another in the three-dimensional space that we see, but still be connected in the other eight dimensions. To me, non-locality could be an artifact of our misunderstanding multidimensionality.

S*tring theory has been proven mathematically but not experientially, right?* There is a mathematics to string theory, but that is different from proving it. Science can get caught up in circular thinking, which I think is the current problem in neuroscience. When it comes to understanding the brain and its role in consciousness, we might be asking the wrong questions. Kim Peek was the person that Rain Man was modeled after. His abilities were so phenomenal that it was almost like he was psychic. He had read over 12,000 books that he could recite word for word, backward and forward. Yet, his brain had a large hole in the center, because he was born

with hydrocephalus, or "water on the brain." His left and right hemispheres were missing the band of fibers that connects the two.

His brain challenges our model for memory storage. If memory is merely a function of strengthening one's synaptic connections, how could somebody have such incredible memory when they have such a disconnected brain? Rather than the brain being what generates consciousness, what if consciousness generates the brain? Could the brain be the remote control for our consciousness field? What if its primary function is to help us navigate space-time? By asking the questions this way, does more of the data fit?

Where does the math come in, in terms of frequencies or vibrations or how does math apply? The question is: Can we look at the brain the way that an engineer would? If we were to look at the brain as a device, without any preconceptions about how it works, what does its structure tell us about how it performs its functions? Could mathematical formulas enlighten us? I believe they could.

In my clairvoyant training, teachers emphasized the pineal gland was being activated, so I wonder if that fits in with this theory? Yes, that fits in with my theory. The pineal gland is actually a modified third eye. It originated evolutionarily as an eye and there are lizards that still have a third eye on top of their heads. As our brains evolved, the limbic system and the cortex were added on top, and the pineal became a deep structure in the center.

You mentioned that you are an empath and you stay grounded. How do you do that so that you don't get swamped by the issues of the patients you're working with? It helps to be an artist, surrounded by beauty and in Oregon, surrounded by nature. When I am seeing a patient who is at rock bottom, I remember those who are really doing well now who weren't before, and from that I find hope. If I wasn't effective with my patients, I couldn't continue to do it.

The world situation looks so grim and it looks like it's getting worse rather than better with all the autocrats being elected, such as in Brazil. Do you have hope? I have more hope for our future than I think most people have right now. I don't believe everything I hear in the media. *What about climate change, growing inequality, millions of people hungry?* These trends have been going on for a period of time. The difference now is that people are starting to have the difficult conversations that are needed in

order to address them. A lot of people are suffering right now, but I also see a lot of people who are upset about that. People in the trenches are starting to mobilize.

Instead of waiting for mainstream science to accept the evidence for a paradigm shift, 350 scientists signed a manifesto for a post-material science and created a new science academy called the Academy for the Advancement of Post-Materialist Sciences. I'm among them. That kind of thing is reason for hope because you have people saying, "I'll still work with the system, but I am not going to look to them to open up the doors to make it happen." An increasing number of doctors are leaving the medical system per se and creating private practices where they say: "Pay me a retainer every month and I'll answer the phone when you need me and take care of you." In contrast, in a typical medical delivery system, we spend five minutes with the patient and 10 minutes with the chart. That's not sustainable, it's not healthy, it's not good, nobody likes it.

Now we see this pushback where things have gotten so far out of whack that it's starting to swing back. I am not denying that things are still out of whack, but more people are aware. Every single system that you can think of in this country is broken, and I've known about that my whole career, but more people are waking up to that.

Book

The ESP Enigma: The Scientific Case for Psychic Phenomena. Walker Books, 2008

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Serena Roney-Dougal, Ph.D.

Where Science and Magic Meet

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Why is the UK more open to psi research than the US? What nature spirits do they identify?

What seems to predict psi ability as in Ganzfeld and remote viewing? What's the connection with the pineal gland?

How does she connect Buddhist thought with Quantum Physics?

What's the application of Dr. Roney-Dougal's research to organic farming?

I'm Aries sun sign. *And do you relate to that?* Very much so; I'm always ahead of the time. *What's your birth order?* I have an older brother born in Japan. I was born in Libya when my father was in the army; during the war, he fought in Burma against the Japanese. After the war, my mother married him and joined him in India. I spent my first 18 months in Libya living on the shores of the Mediterranean.

What was there about your family that led you to get a Ph.D. in parapsychology? I was born in Africa but then we moved to Austria, to Germany, and then to Scotland. My dad's family is Scottish and he was with a Scottish regiment. We moved to the country south of Edinburgh near the hills. I grew up with my mother talking about the ghost that she'd seen when she was a child. Her mother and her aunts all had psychic abilities. We basically had a psychic family lineage which was accepted as quite normal. The big house had a grey lady ghost and a Goblin Hall. If there was a field drain blocked my father would get his twisted coat hangers to dowse the location of the blockage. Scottish culture is very open to fair folk and witchcraft; it's there in the histories, in the land, with people with the second sight in psychic families.

When I got to University College London to do psychology and discovered there were these English people who didn't think that psychic phenomena existed, I thought they were blind people, like I was describing a sunset to them but they were completely blind. I was fortunate that, in my second year, a post-graduate persuaded the department to let him do two lab classes in parapsychology. I was hooked. I was also fortunate that Professor Norman Dixon was one of the leading researchers into subliminal perception who was willing to supervise my final year project in parapsychology and my Ph.D.

As far as I know, there's only one American with a Ph.D. in parapsychology, Jeffrey Mishlove, whereas in Britain there are maybe 50 people with parapsychology Ph.Ds. Why is there more openness to that study in the UK?* In Britain, we have our roots in the past with our Stonehenges and our Avebury stone circles, the village wise woman and the Druids. I've spent a lot of time in the States and my feeling is that the immigrants from Columbus onward have not rooted properly in the land. Where I live in Glastonbury we believe that Gwyn ap Nudd, the lord of the Welsh underworld Annwn, has his castle on the Tor. The entrance to Annwn is there, where you cross the Red Spring to the White Spring. That hill is deep in its mythology and history and links with Arthur and with Joseph of Arimathea.

In terms of academia, there's still negativity towards the psychic, which came from the witch burnings and the Inquisition for 400 years where people were in fear of their lives for being psychic. But you can't kill the spirit deeply rooted in the land. Because I've got roots in the land, it can emerge in me. Part of the reason we've got so many Ph.D. students in Britain is due to Bob Morris. Arthur Koestler left a million pounds to set up a Chair in Parapsychology at Edinburgh University. Morris came over from Syracuse University to take that chair enabling people to get Ph.D.s and they got jobs as lecturers in the universities around Britain and mentored their own students.

When I started university in the 1970s there was Gertrude Schmeidler at City University in New York, people at Princeton University and Yale, during the psychedelic explosion era when people were much more relaxed. America has got a very strong Puritanical founding father situation, the ones who burnt the witches and hated anything that smelled of being psychic. Therefore, it's much more polarized and harder for people to be open in academic circles about their experiences and about their interests.

Native Americans have that connection with nature and spirit but their culture has been so decimated by the dominant culture that it's been weakened. Yes, absolutely. The traditional native people here, the Gaelic people, the Celtic peoples of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, have been in many ways dominated by the English. The Scots were even forbidden to speak their language [*like the Native Americans or First Nation Canadians*] Now there's a resurgence and they have their own parliaments and they're

reforesting the Caledonian forest. They're taking the land back and it feels like the spirit is returning.

What were your most difficult challenges and how did you cope? Probably relationships but let's leave that. In terms of parapsychology, I wasn't allowed to do my Ph.D. in parapsychology at City University, London. Fortunately, Professor Terence Lee at Surrey University already had two students doing Ph.D.s in parapsychology (Ernesto Spinelli and Susan Blackmore*) and was willing to take me on. That meant that I had to move university and had to do my Ph.D. a hundred miles away from the university where I was enrolled, so it took me 10 years to do my degree. At one point it felt like I was holding on by a spider thread but fortunately, that's the strongest material that we've ever encountered.

Were you meditating at the time to help you? When I started my Ph.D. in parapsychology, I also started to practice yoga so I had three years of classes in London before I came to Glastonbury. I started teaching yoga so that I would have people to help me keep my practice going. My research and my experience have told me you need 15 to 20 years of practice before you start to realize the benefits from it. In terms of the yoga asanas, the body will feel the benefits quite quickly but in terms of the emotions and the mind, the prana and the meditation, that takes much longer. I was going through quite a lot of growing during that period.

What was the title of your dissertation? "Comparison of Subliminal and Psychic Perception*."* At the subliminal level, there are thousands of perceptions coming in all the time but we're not consciously aware of them. However, we can do techniques like the Ganzfeld, dreaming, relaxing or visualization so those impressions come through to consciousness. I had people in the Ganzfeld where their eyes are covered with a translucent screen, with headphones on with a waterfall noise. In half the sessions there would be subliminal words coming through their headphones that they couldn't hear because they were masked by the waterfall.

In half of the sessions, they would be unplugged from a tape recorder and the sender in another room would be listening to those words and try to send them to the recipient. The person in the session didn't know whether it was subliminal or psychic because all they heard was the waterfall. Then they talked about their imagery and were given five lots of words and had to say which one they thought it was, rank and rate it.

People who were able to pick up on the subliminal information were the ones who also picked up on the psychic information, so one is either aware of both subliminal and psychic levels or one is defensive and blocked at both subliminal and psychic levels. You're either sensitive to dream material and the unconscious, the very subtle quiet voice that you've got to listen for, or you're very blocked and defensive. *Were you able to predict with personality scales who would be open and who would be blocked?* I tried all sorts of different personality inventories and none of it came out strong and clear and that's what has been found in general.

Gertrude Schmeidler first looked at belief back in the late '40s early '50s and found it's the one predictor that tells us consistently that if you believe that you can be psychic under the test conditions, if you have had psychic experiences as a child, or you have experienced other people being psychic, then you are more likely to score well in test situations. That's why I think culture is the most important thing because that's part of belief. In my talks, I always say, "Your attitude is the most important action you can take." If I think I'm going to win the tennis match I'm more likely to win than if I think I won't. If you've got an attitude of "I can," then you can.

People who say there's no such thing as being psychic have already stopped themselves from experiencing it and they will block other people around them by the force of their negation. Western culture blocks this experience around the world because it's now dominant. You will find that cultures that become Westernized start to become skeptical about the psychic.

You've lived and taught in India, the UK, Japan, and the US. Are there different approaches in the different countries? I taught parapsychology to the younger Tibetan monks when I was working in the monastery in South India. When you're teaching with a translator, everything is much slower and you have got to simplify. I taught at the ashram at the Yoga University in English where most of the students were Indian.

I did find that their approach to the subject was very different because Indian culture says a teacher is almost a complete know-it-all and not to be questioned. They have been taught to basically write down everything that you say and rote-learn it, so I had to really encourage them to ask questions and dialogue. The majority would still just sit there silently and write down everything that you said. *Japan and China were like that, too, in my*

experience because they mainly study for the college entrance exam test that requires memorizing a lot of information. In Japan, I was teaching at a yoga center with unusual adult students with lots of really good interaction. *That was my experience in Japan too.*

What is a yoga university? Various swami lineages have created yoga universities. I was in the Bihar School of Yoga started by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, accredited by the Indian government. I taught a two-year post-graduate course for three years. The school was a hothouse of growth and development because we were all within 10-foot high walls and the students were only allowed out one day a fortnight. We started with yoga asanas at 5:00 am, breakfast at 6:00, then karma yoga for an hour cleaning the ashram, to ordinary classes, to meditation the hour before lunch, then lunch, then a two-hour break to do service, then more classes until the tea break, supper, chanting kirtan and then to bed by 8:00 pm to get up at 4:00 am. *A lot of unconscious material would come up under that kind of intensity.* Yes, I found a huge shift in my personal development as I attended the yoga asanas, the meditation, the kirtan and yoga philosophy or yoga psychology classes.

How would you say that you changed after the three years? In my personal practice—*sadhana*, it really gave me a big kick to do regular practice. They taught not only the Vedic scriptures but also the Tantric scriptures; that yoga philosophy informed my worldview enormously and it changed the way in which I live my personal life because a lot of yoga is about your lifestyle. Actually, the starting point of yoga is your *Dharma*, your duty and how you live your life. So the way I live my life now has been informed to a great degree by those years in the ashram.

Did people experience siddhis like levitating, etc.? No, the Swami considered that sort of experience as something that you just put down to experience and should go on with the practice. The aim is enlightenment and siddhis are distractions along the way. But they're also teaching points, so I was invited to teach parapsychology because they considered it better to be informed than to be ignorant. Psychic stuff tests you in areas of humility and equanimity. *Transcendental Meditation offered seminars where the aim was to levitate, so you see videos of them bouncing off the ground.* The Satyananda philosophy is a very different teaching and practice to do with the whole of one's being.

What textbooks did you use? I took over a basic library of books that I used in my classes in Britain. We started off with history from Franz Mesmer in the 19th century, through mediumistic studies, and on to laboratory experiments with four choices such as with Zener cards, and on to the '70s with RV and work with altered states, ending up with looking at ghosts, poltergeists, OBEs, and more personal life experiences. Because they were post-graduates, I thought it was important for them to do practical work as well as theory so they would spend a month or so on their own personal project. One of those projects really intrigued me so I got permission from the guru to do my own research with the students and monks and nuns. This was what led to the research with the Tibetans.

I looked at Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* teaching that as you attained samadhi (enlightenment), the siddhis manifest. We questioned did they happen when you attain samadhi or was there a gradual change as you did your practice over the years? A statistician from America joined me because I needed a statistician to help with the design and a friend of mine developed a computer program I used with the Tibetans. The results from the ashram suggested that as you did your practice, slowly but surely the changes happened. It was nothing to do with the asanas (yoga postures) or to do with the pranayama (breath exercises), it was the years of practice of meditation that was the most important. We got corroboration with two further experiments that what we'd found in the ashram was true for the Tibetans in that the years of practice are correlated to a very high degree with increasing awareness at the clairvoyant level.

How did you measure their clairvoyance and did you find people who had reached samadhi*?* I never got to work with anyone who was enlightened but I had interviews with the most amazing Rinpoche. I was only allowed to spend 20 minutes in his room at any one time, but I would walk out feeling as though I was floating on air because he has poured so much love into me in the most brilliant experience. I did work with some very experienced Lamas who had done years of retreat and years of practice. It felt like a real blessing to be able to work with these amazing people.

What are examples of their heightened clairvoyant abilities and how did you measure that? We used a very basic free response design. In the computer we had 100 pictures; with the Tibetans, we used pictures of India and Tibet divided into 25 sets of four. At random the computer would

choose one of those sets. The person would go into meditation to become aware of the picture that would be chosen by the computer at the end of the session. It's basic RV. At the end of their meditation, they would draw their experiences as RVers do. They would describe to the translator what they experienced and saw, which is on record. They would make their choice from the four pictures, then they would get to see the actual picture.

An example, an experienced meditator drew a valley full of flowers. One of the pictures showed a rock pool with lovely flora. When he saw the picture he said, "What's that?" because it was outside his experience as he had never seen the sea, but he said, "That's what I saw!" He described it from his experience, a valley full of flowers, but he knew immediately that that's what it related to.

Usually, there's a 27% to 31% hit rate for four-choice experiments. With the Lamas, we were into the 50 to 60% hit rate but overall it was close to chance. We had everybody do at least eight sessions for statistical reasons and also Tibetan teaching is that you've got to repeat something at least seven times in order to really know it.

British researchers are interested in the correlation of psychology, personality type, and people who have psi abilities, such as schizopathy. When I was doing my Ph.D., I did a whole load of personality questionnaires but I've always been more interested in the process. I'm interested in what Granny Weatherwax calls "headology" (she's a fictional witch in Terry Pratchett's Discworld book series who uses a kind of folk psychology.[44]) Working in India, both with the yogis and the Tibetans, I found the most important influence is cultural beliefs. Tibetans have the psychic as part of everyday life. Every monastery does divination and has an astrologer. Most of them will have a medium—whom they call oracles. In Tibetan villages, usually, there's a healer or a wise woman. The monks I worked with finished their three-year retreat and then their job was to go to the villages and do rituals to help with healing or with somebody who was possessed. It's ordinary for them, and they consider that science destroys spirituality.

I found it very hard to get the older monks to work with me because they considered doing science would be detrimental, where the younger monks who grew up with the Dalai Lama saying we need to join science and spirituality were quite happy to help me. The problem was they hadn't done much meditation. Here in the West, everybody is OK with the science

but most are not OK with the psychic stuff. I consider that Western culture is extremely detrimental to people being conscious of their psychic awareness. *I think TV and media have made it worse because it's chatter all the time.* I worked with a monk in Ladakh, high in the Himalayas as remote from the Western world as you can get. He grew up in a very remote valley and was living in Lei, the capital of Ladakh, running a retreat center there. He told me,

> *I won't be able to do the level of psychic awareness that I would be able to do if I was living in my remote valley. There's too much interference here. There's televisions, cars, lots of people and chatter, whereas in my remote valley for six months of the year, you can't get in or out. You're basically stuck in your room because it's minus 40 degrees outside. There you would get the top psychic awareness from me.*

Is your book about the Faery Faith *similar to Findhorn Garden and their work with the nature spirits, the devas? The Faery Faith* came out of a chapter in my first book *Where Science and Magic Meet*. While I was writing it, I was reading W. Y. Evans-Wentz's *The Faery-Faith in Celtic Countries (1977)*, which I consider the best book about this topic. *Where Science and Magic Meet* was a best-seller, so I was invited to give talks and workshops all around Britain and Europe and America. I was often asked to expand on the faery faith chapter and so I did. In that expansion, I took a lot of material from Evans-Wentz and I called it *The Faery Faith* in homage to him.

What I noticed in his work is that there are four strands to the legends and the myths: 1) the elementals or the devas, the elemental forces within earth, water, air, and fire. 2) Poltergeist literally means noisy spirit and traditionally in Britain, the belief is that if you left the house in disarray the local spirit would get very upset and you'd get poltergeist phenomena—the local nature spirits are part of the morality of the human. 3) The next level is the fair folk, the Shining Ones, who could marry the human people or the Iron Age Celtic people, before the Romans were in Britain. A lot of the Scottish families claim their lineage from one of the fair folk.

An example is the McLeod clan who lived on the island of Skye with Dunvegan Castle as their stronghold. They have a faery banner because one of the chiefs of Dunvegan married a faery woman who gave him a son and

then disappeared after saying that if this banner was ever raised, the faery hordes would come to the aid of the clan of the MacLeods. That's where you get the second sight lineages. In the witch-burning times, all of the witches of Scotland who were tried said that they had their psychic abilities because they had connections with the fair folk.

4) The Neolithic people built the stone circles. When the Celtic peoples moved into these lands about 1800 BCE in the Bronze Age and about 700 to 800 BCE in the Iron Age, they found amazing sacred places and deified them like the Celtic deities of Manannan mac Lir and Gwyn ap Nudd, Ceridwen, and Rhiannon.

These traditions are in many ways interlinked but the modern faery renaissance that's happening is not connected to the deep cultural tradition of the Celtic peoples. The Elvish people are of human height. If you go to *Lord of the Rings* you'll find that the Dwarfish people are human height as well. Your tiny little fairy is a Victorian romance. *Aren't the elementals in our gardens tiny?* They don't look human because the elemental is a tidal wave, a volcano, a huge force of nature, the spirit within the old oak tree, the tinkling of the bubbling spring, and the hush of the wind as it blows through the pine trees. You're connecting with the spirit of nature when you're connecting with an elemental and to put a human form on it is ridiculous.

At Findhorn Garden in Scotland, they worked with the deva of the cabbage or the rat deva to tell it, "Please don't come to this part of the garden." Findhorn is so New Age that I would rather not talk about it. There was a particular person, named Rock, who was written out of its history but he was the connection with spirit in that land. This is an animist philosophy that believes everything has spirit. You're dealing with the energy that is within that living being, that cabbage. Once you connect with the whole of the planet as a living spirit with its own aspect of consciousness, then you start to relate to the world in a very different way. We would be less destructive of this beautiful planet if we could once again connect and relate with nature in this form.

In terms of faery folk, how do they exist today? Like the rest of the planet, there's a mass extinction happening—one sentient lifeform/being/species goes extinct every single hour. Nature loves being wild but the cities and pouring pesticides on the ground makes it hard, as does mining, quarrying, and the plastic pollution. This planet is having a

really tough time but the planet is bigger than the destruction that we create. Most people who think they're connecting with fair folk are connecting with creatures of their own imagination. *I've read books where people said they had conversations with faeries; do you think that's mostly their imagination?* Yes, 90%.

Do you feel encouraged by the young people taking a stand for the earth? We took a big stand back in the 1970s when some of us changed our lifestyles. I knew that we had gone too far in the '90s when no change had been made. We are in the midst of the largest mass extinction that this planet has ever known. George Bernard Shaw said that hope is a delicious meal for breakfast and it's poison for supper. We've reached supper.

I'm interested in what you found about the pineal gland and psi phenomena because in my training they said the pineal gland is the root of clairvoyant abilities. This was the center point of *Where Science and Magic Meet*. During the Ganzfeld I was working with altered states of consciousness and whilst I was in my first year doing my Ph.D. I got flown out to America by McDonald Douglas Corporation that gave money to the Parapsychology Association for aspiring students to attend a conference in St. Louis.

I arrived in Chicago airport, got on the Greyhound bus, arrived in St. Louis and went to the campus thinking that there'd be students around and I'd find somebody's floor that I could sleep on, but it was all locked. I hadn't realized campuses closed in the summer because students had to work. I found a small café and half a dozen graduate students. So I got a coffee, sat myself down, and said, "Excuse me, could anybody put me up for the night?" This gorgeous young man with hair down to his waist said, "Sure!" So I went and met him and his lovely wife who was a potter and he was doing post-graduate research into psychoactive plants. He had a garden and a greenhouse full of every psychoactive plant you could wish to buy. He'd just come back from staying with the Schuar people in Peru and recording their traditions around Ayahuasca.

I told him I'm doing parapsychology and said he had read a book by Claudio Naranjo who had worked with Ayahuasca.[45] He considered that the sacred vines that made the harmala alkaloids were the key thing to take you into what he considered to be the collective unconscious. [*See David Luke.**] It may be connected with a chemical found in the brain, perhaps connected in some way with the pineal gland. My yoga teacher wrote a

book about the pineal gland being the aina chakra, the third eye, the psychic center of the chakra system. Here, I had two bits of information and was very excited because I was working on altered states of consciousness.

There's also a book by anthropologist Michael Harner who worked with people who took ayahuasca and talked about their clairvoyant and precognitive experiences and the shamanic healing experiences while using it.

I had a friend who was studying neurochemistry at a hospital in London who started scouring the literature for me. I started to build up a picture at the neurochemical level and the anthropological level of what was going on. By 1981, they had isolated a chemical from the pineal gland that they called pinoline that was chemically identical with the harmala alkaloids of the sacred vine of ayahuasca. So the yoga teaching that the pineal gland is the psychic center now had a neurochemical basis for it.

What we've discovered since then is that the pineal gland is where you get the greatest concentration of serotonin. The pinoline stops the serotonin from breaking down so that the serotonin which is 5HT (hydroxy-tryptamine), goes into an unstable state and makes various other forms of tryptamine, one of which is DMT (dimethyltryptamine), a highly potent hallucinogen. So we all have DMT, a Class A drug, in our brains every night of our lives. Perhaps it's the natural trigger for dreaming.

Parapsychologists have found that spontaneous psychic experiences occur most commonly in the dreaming/sleeping state, which may be connected with the fact that the brain creates DMT at night, which is connected with the pinoline made in the pineal gland. It's found in the brain and in the gut. There's lots of research going on into DMT at the moment, such as by Professor Rick Strassman. He's an M.D. in the States who's got permission to do research with DMT and now somebody in Britain has finally got Home Office permission to do research with DMT. The suggestion is that it helps with depression.

In the '70s after Timothy Leary, research with psychoactive substances was banned. Now bit by bit they're allowing research with psychoactive substances again [*as seen in Michael Pollan's 2019 book,* How to Change Your Mind, *about "the new science of psychedelics" and David Luke's* chapter*].

How is DMT made outside of the body? Does ayahuasca have DMT? Ayahuasca is made from a mix of the sacred vine banisteriopsis caapi and,

depending on which tribe is making it in the Amazon area, they all used a different herb mixed with the sacred vine but this herb would contain DMT. Psychotria viridis is one of them, niximae caapi is another one of the various different herbs that contain DMT. The problem is that if you ingest just the herb the gut refuses to assimilate it. But if you ingest that herb together with the sacred vine, the *harmala alkaloids*, that enables the DMT to be assimilated into the bloodstream and up to the brain to give the psychoactive effects.

There's another plant that contains the harmala alkaloids called Syrian rue, peganum harmala, used throughout the Middle East. It's not got DMT, but containing harmala alkaloids, maybe it interacts with the serotonin in the same way that the pinoline does for us to endogenously create our own DMT. We don't quite know why Syrian rue is considered to be a psychoactive substance but that's a possibility.

Does this suggest that if someone is an exceptional remote viewer or great at Ganzfeld that their pineal gland might be operating in a different way than someone who's not? I don't know but what I do know is that we don't need to take ayahuasca and be violently sick. The yogic tradition says that the aina chakra, the psychic center, can be affected by meditation. We can affect all of the functioning of our body through meditation—our hormones, our emotional and mental state. I would like researchers to work with people who are very experienced with meditation to see whether there is a change in their blood chemistry, which might corroborate these ideas. We can affect the functioning of our pineal gland and our hormonal states so that we are creating these psychoactive substances that seem to be conducive for psychic experiences.

I also think that the sacred sites of Britain and around the world are places that shift us into a more psi-conducive state of consciousness in a link with the Earth's magnetic field. My latest research was working with meditators to look at the effect of the Earth's magnetic field on psychic awareness. I found that the people who were most sensitive to changes in the geomagnetic field were the people whose psychic awareness was most strongly correlated with changes in the Earth's magnetic field. That's another area where we are either open to that effect or closed to it, like all subliminal perceptions. The people who are most sensitive to those changes show a strong correlation between their psychic awareness and what is

going on with the Earth's magnetic field. Stone circles and other sacred sites are places where you get strong changes in the magnetic field.

The pineal gland is exquisitely sensitive to changes in the Earth's magnetic field so maybe its functioning is being affected. If we think of the sacred sites, they are places connected with the fair folk, witchcraft, Druids, and magic. I'm suggesting that the Neolithic people who built them were scientists at the psychic level in creating structures that would enhance our psychic awareness. Maybe the whole pineal gland hypothesis, DMT, and altered states of consciousness hypothesis are in some way connected.

Glastonbury is famous for being a center with ley lines and energy centers. What do you feel when you're in one of those charged centers in your town? The Tor, which I've already talked about as the high hill thought to be the castle of Gwyn ap Nudd; the entrance to the underworld is through the Tor. It's also got the sacred waters of the White Spring and Chalice Well which are the Red and the White Rivers that you have to cross when you go into Anoon. It's also got Chalice Hill and the abbey where Joseph of Arimathea was supposed to have founded the first Christian church at the foot of the hill. The town is part of the Isle of Avalon. People who come here tend to have very strong experiences.

When I was doing my parapsychology classes, I'd always include questionnaires asking people about the experiences that they'd had in a place of very intense spiritual development. Because it's so intense a lot of people can be very disturbed, but for those people for whom it's good there's incredible creativity. The town is awash with musicians, artists, craftspeople and theater.

What about your work with the organic farm? It came out of one of my parapsychology classes. I did advanced classes where we would spend the two terms just on two or three topics and that year one of the people in the class was a very good distant healer. Another healer in town approached me a few years later to do research with me. He was known for germinating seeds in his hands and there'd already been research in parapsychology looking at healers holding water that was poured on seeds that grew faster and germinated better than seeds that had ordinary water poured on them. So I suggested to him, "Why don't we scale up this research and work with an organic farm to see if we could get the seed growing bigger and better and healthier?" The difference between organic and chemical farming is only 10% in terms of profitability so if organic seed could be enhanced by

10% that would mean that organic farming would be as profitable as chemical farming.

I went with the healer to the farm where the grower gave us unopened seeds. Somebody put 100 seeds in each of four pots. The healer would then be given one of the pots and a mimic healer, who said that she did not have green fingers in any way, had another pot. Two pots would be put to one side as controls, completely untouched. The healer would hold his hands around the pot and the mimic would do the same. One person labeled the pots ABCD and was the only one who knew which pot was which. They never go back to the farm again so that it was completely double-blind. Then the grower took the four pots, sowed the seeds in a tray of A, B, C, and D, all equally watered. A photographer took photographs of them every week and counted how many germinated in each tray. Then they were planted in six middle rows and harvested and weighed.

We did this three years running, with two different healers on two different farms, with six to eight trials in each year with thousands of lettuces. Each year the seeds blessed by the healer had greater growth. They were significantly larger in their net weight. They suffered as much slug damage but significantly less fungal damage. That meant that a healer blessing the seeds enables organic crops to be bigger and better. *Was there a difference between the sham healer's and the ones that didn't get any human attention?* No, the only difference was with the seed blessed by the healer.

Do you think that people can be taught to be healers? We all have our talents and our abilities and some people are healers. *If this technique was to spread, people would have to be taught how to enhance their "green fingeredness."* I've discovered that working with meditation, you learn to work with your mind and your prana—or however you understand the life force. You only need one healer in the community to go and bless all the crops. When Britain was a Catholic country, the Catholic priests used to walk around the crop fields and sprinkle holy water over the crops a bit like a healer affecting the water that was poured over seeds. When I was in Ladakh they were frightened that there were going to be locusts eating all their crops coming from Tibet, so they had a Rinpoche come to do ritual with a fire, and that ash was spread around their fields to protect their crops from the invading locusts.

Some people say that psi phenomena can be explained by quantum physics with entanglement and non-local effects of entangled particles. I

was very taken with the work of David Bohm. When I was studying Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, particularly that of Nagarjuna, I saw that he said very similar things to Bohm. Kashmiri Shaivism is another philosophy that is saying very similar things to Bohm. I do see a link between Buddhism, quantum physics, and psychic theory.

Does it have to do with consciousness being primary rather than materialism? Nagarjuna, Kashmiri Shaivism, and Tibetan Buddhist Mahayana philosophy are a "both-and" philosophy in that they are two sides of the same thing. Tibetan Buddhists avoid the two extremes of monism and dualism by advocating a third way known as the middle way. To go monistic or dualistic is to miss the point that we are talking about two sides of the same coin. I've been reading Dhammapada, the Buddhist philosophy, and they also have a three-way view, while Kashmiri Shaivsim and the Nagarjuna philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism have it as a two-way, in that it's consciousness/energy or consciousness/vibration. You've seen the yin-yang statues where you've got the two together, like the male and the female, the divinity and the consort. It's this fusion of consciousness/energy which is primary within the whole universe.

Before the Big Bang, there was something else and there are probably multi-universes. Yes, the latest thinking now is that black holes are basically birthing other universes. The Western worldview has a beginning, a middle, and an end but the Eastern worldview has the circle that is always infinite, always changing, but all is beginning, all is middle, all is end. Matthieu Ricard wrote *The Quantum and the Lotus* in 2000; he's a Western scientist who became a Buddhist. In the book, he talks with a Buddhist Vietnamese man who became a physicist.

In Buddhism, they have the concept of *sunyata* or emptiness, which is like the nothingness before the Big Bang and the best way for us to translate that word is "infinite potential." This is Bohm's implicate order;[46] behind this world in which we live is infinite potential where the Shiva Shakti exists in its subtlest form and comes through the different levels of subtleness to this gross form that we live in. So when people talk about emptiness, actually what they're talking about is the infinite potential of the formless behind this world of form. [*See Ruth Kastner.**]

For me, this philosophy that I came across in the ashram and with the Tibetans is also the philosophy of David Bohm. So whether it's quantum physics, string theory, or M theory, when we go to the subtlest aspect of the

physical, we come through like the ouroboros where the physical and the spiritual unite at this level. *The snake with its tail in its mouth.*

Books

Where Science and Magic Meet, 2013
The Faery Faith, 2003

Paul H. Smith, Ph.D.

A Remote Viewer on the Threshold of Spirituality and Consciousness

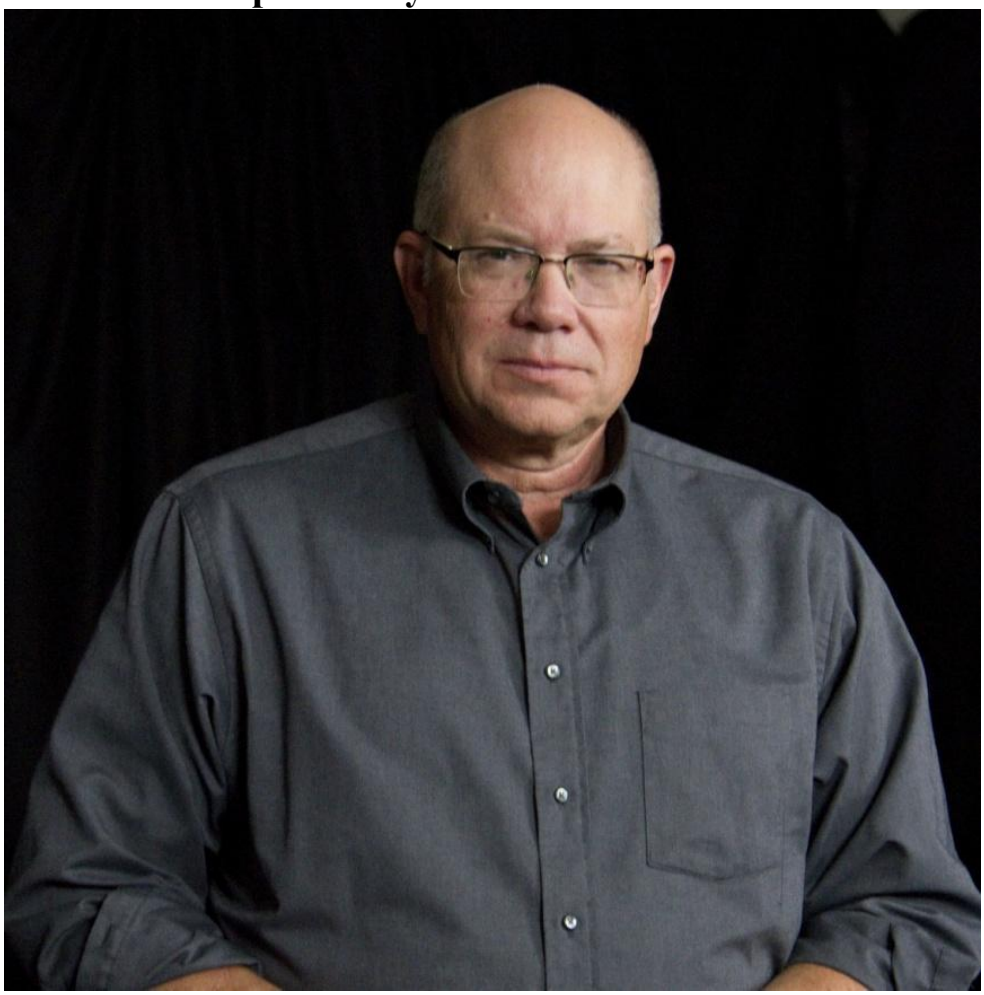


Photo courtesy of Paul H. Smith

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What kinds of information was Dr. Smith able to remote view and dowse during his career with the Army?

What kind of preparation does he do to remote view? Does he think it's a teachable skill?

What is Associative Remote Viewing?

How do different traditions define consciousness and what's Dr. Smith's definition? How does he refute materialism?

I was born August 13, 1952, in Oregon. *As a Leo, are you a leader with quiet dignity kind of person?* No one's ever described me as being quiet and dignified but I do tend to take charge, at least since I've gotten older. If there is a vacuum in leadership I tend to fill that vacuum. *Your Myers-Briggs?* I pegged all the way over on all four scales for ENTP.

Are you a bishop in the LDS church? First a caveat: Obviously, much of what I'm going to discuss will sound bizarre to many other Christians and like fantasy to atheists, who generally think everything religious is fantasy anyway. That's fine. I respect others' beliefs (although I don't mind a friendly debate about them!) and expect them to respect mine as well. So, no, they would never make me a bishop! I'm too "iconoclastic." It's interesting because The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, or "Mormon") has a tradition of encouraging spiritual gifts and prophecy, which they call personal revelation.

Can you make a link between that belief and your RVing? I did a presentation at a Mormon intellectual conference years ago and posted the paper online, "Confessions of a Mormon Psychic Spy: what my seven years as a government RVer taught me about the Gospel." Mormons are seen as the odd guy out in the Christian world for a number of reasons. ("Mormon" is just a nickname for the full name of the church, but I'll continue using "Mormon" because it's shorter.) The large majority of Christians tend to think that God created us as at the time we're either conceived or born. Mormons believe the basic "I"-ness, the basic personhood, has existed forever. At a certain point, God then created us as spirit, taking that basic identity and wrapping it in spirit. That's not how the average Mormon might phrase it, but it gives you the idea. At a certain point, we were born into this life and acquired a physical body as well.

We think of a human soul as being a layering of these things. As a spirit we're able to communicate, to cover space and time without a physical body. When you think about that, it sounds a lot like ESP. So consider these as among our spiritual abilities and when we're born into this life we forget the past life. We talk about there being a veil across our minds because we're here to prove ourselves to some degree and if we know too much about our past existence we can't do that. *You'd be overwhelmed with guilt if you thought about all the things you've done previously.* Generally, we don't believe that. I call this Mormon belief "linear" reincarnation. It's not cyclical like you get in Eastern religions where you've lived a life before here on Earth. Rather, having lived a life as a spirit is an essentially sheltered existence. When you come here that's where the real work begins.

The church says we're here to learn to integrate those spiritual abilities with our newly-acquired physical ones—which is what I think we're doing with RV and all these ESP-based skills. My religious interpretation is what we're doing when we learn these abilities is remembering vaguely what we used to be able to do in our premortal life and syncing that up with our physical existence. I find Mormons more accepting of ESP and those kinds of phenomena than most other mainstream Christian belief traditions because it makes sense in the context of our theology.

Does the church believe that the body ascends physically to heaven at the time of death? No*,* what happens after we die is our spirits separate from our bodies that decay away, while the spirit dwells in the spirit world. At the time of the Second Coming and the Resurrection, our spirits are reunited with perfected immortal physical bodies. How that immortality is achieved I can't tell you, although I could speculate. Mormons believe that the spirit and the body need to be together because in order to be fully operative in the universe you need both aspects to be successful. Mormons consequently also believe that God has a perfect, physical body as well. We believe that we become like God in that sense, in that we're both physical and spiritual.

After you die you'll be male and you'll be reunited with your wife and children in heaven? I'm interested in that because very few Western religious traditions have a female power symbol and the LDS belief that God has a wife is intriguing, although no one hardly mentions her. Mormons believe that on earth today we have a prophet in the Hebrew sense of giving revelations from God. *The president of the church*. Some of

these latter-day prophets have discussed this mother in heaven concept where God has a spouse who is in a sense a co-God.

Our concept of God is to be fully God you have to have both the male and the female working together. The belief is similar to some Eastern religions but different in that we believe God and God's spouse are separate individuals working together. *Do people pray to her like Catholics pray to Mary to intercede with her son?* No, in fact, we're discouraged from doing that. When you talk to God you're talking to her as well anyway. We address prayers to the Father partly because Jesus instructed people to talk to God. They're not supposed to pray to Jesus; they're supposed to address God.

The president of the church is considered a prophet. Is he selected because of his prophetic gifts? Yes, we like to believe God selects them and in interesting ways, like a living lottery. The church leadership cultivates inspiration to know who to pick for the various levels of leadership as they come up through the church. Ultimately the governing council, called the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (like the time of Jesus and his apostles) is inspired to select the next apostles to replace the ones that die.

It dawned on me that you see this pattern of people dying in the quorum that ultimately weeds out people and the last guy standing becomes the prophet. It's God that makes that decision, right? Mormons have no controversy in choosing the next prophet, there's no fighting, no arguing, no political maneuvering because whoever is alive at the point that they need to be alive becomes a prophet. It's brilliant in terms of peaceful, calm transition.

Is there ever any talk about a woman apostle, a woman being the priestly head of the family? The current tradition is that males hold the priesthood and these primary leadership positions but women do have a lot of power in the hierarchy. We get a lot of critics who say women are subservient; they really don't understand the church because we have women to the level of "general authorities," the chief leadership of the church. They are in charge at their level of overall programs for all the women, children, and to some extent, the welfare program. The Mormon church has a robust welfare program to help its members and even people who aren't its members in times of trouble. The women are still subordinate to the male hierarchy and that rubs a lot of people the wrong way.

The interesting thing is that all worthy males hold a level of priesthood at some point. No other denomination or religion, as far as I know, has that teaching, so that every male over a certain age has a role and responsibility in the priesthood. I can't get into this discussion because it involves the temple and things we're not supposed to discuss in public, but women perform priestly functions in the temple. There is some historical precedence when Joseph Smith thought about conveying a certain level of priesthood on women. I wouldn't rule that out, as the church is a dynamic institution. In fact, there's been a lot of things happening recently that have really remade the base of the church [*such as granting the priesthood to men of color*] so it's not impossible that someday there may be a revelation that women in some degree have priesthood responsibilities beyond what they have now.

What about the golden tablets that Joseph Smith found and translated, I saw in one of your articles that you could link that to RVing or spiritual gifts. Joseph Smith used the *seer stone*, which is in the Bible and has something to do with what was called the "Urim and Thummim," which means lights and truths. It could be described as a kind of scrying device where you look into it and perceive things. David used something like it in one of the Books of Kings to find out where the bad guys were. Joseph Smith used the seer stone to translate the gold plates, but he lost them because he didn't behave the way he was supposed to behave.

Ultimately, he started using his seer stone. A lot of people tie this into the folk-magic traditions of the time and they think that that's a slam-dunk against Joseph Smith. I have no issue with it because I know that a lot of these folk-magic practices are based on real efficacy. Scrying does work under certain conditions and there is a fair amount of evidence that those plates existed. In a way, it's like RVing, as I made the argument in the paper I wrote.

I described an actual project we did at the military RV program at the Army's Fort Meade trying to determine the contents of a classified document hidden inside a secured building. We were successful in doing that. *How specific were you about the content?* It wasn't a word for word description and the document was in Russian, which made it more interesting. If you summarize the contents of something that's how it came out. It was a fairly low-grade result but accurate to the degree we reported

and under circumstances where it should have been impossible to get anything.

My argument was if we make assumptions that God exists and that he wants to reveal information to his children on earth, and if military RVers trained from a secular perspective were able to do that much, why couldn't Joseph Smith get a very accurate translation of a document in a foreign tongue from an ancient time —as long as God was helping him do it? It makes perfect sense but you can't prove it.

Where did you do your mission when you were a teenager? I was 21 before I went on my mission—again, that iconoclasm, where I'm swimming upstream, since going on mission at 19, was typical. I had to decide that it was really what I should do, but once I did the church sent me to the German-speaking part of Switzerland, which I loved! You're curious about synchronicities: There's a place on the application form to note where you would like to go. I knew that missionaries never got sent to where they said they wanted to go, so I left it blank but I would have chosen Switzerland if I had filled it in. Out of well over a hundred different missions I could have been called to, I went to Switzerland. I was gob-smacked!

In college, you majored in Middle Eastern Studies, Art, and English. What led you to your interest in the Middle East? When I was a kid I was very interested in army and military things. I loved to draw pictures of tanks and battleships and I was always playing army. As a teenager, I wanted to go to the Naval Academy and become a destroyer captain because I was fascinated by destroyers and I also loved tanks. Then the Six-Day war came along in 1967 when Israel routed Arab nations like Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The largest tank battle in history was fought in the Sinai during that war. That got my attention.

I heard about Palestine in Sunday school, with palm trees and camels, but I had no interest in that area until that war got my attention. I started reading everything I could about Israel and the Middle East. I read *Exodus* by Leon Uri, which is very pro-Israeli, and I also read T.H. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* which gave me sympathy for Arabs. I developed a global regard and interest in the Middle East.

This was when you were in high school? Yes, I was at church in Wyoming where I spent my summers working on ranches and farms. A young lady who'd done a semester abroad in Israel came and gave a talk

about it; her experiences were very inspiring for me and got me fascinated by the Middle East. I still have it to a degree.

Did your art studies and experience in drawing botanical illustrations help you with RVing, making it easier to describe what you saw in your mind's eye? Yes, one of the major output devices in RVing is sketching, which can help you convey images that are hard to describe with words. I'd been interested in art longer than I'd been interested in the Middle East. I took art every semester in secondary school and spent my time drawing in any free time I had, fascinated by representing things by line and shading.

I got to college and started majoring in art until I realized you are very lucky if you're able to make a living out of this. In college, I took what I wanted rather than what I should've taken, so I had a lot of Middle Eastern studies courses, a lot of art classes, and I was very interested in writing. All of those came together and paid off when I got into the army.

When I graduated from high school, I went to Brigham Young University, spent three years there and then went on my mission. Then I went back to BYU and married the woman I had dated before I left, but that ended up not working out. We're still friends but we're not spouses anymore. By that time I decided I didn't want to have anything to do with the military because I didn't want people telling me what to do. My wife was gifted linguistically, fluent in French and Dutch and had studied Russian. She wanted to join the army and become a Russian linguist, but she had a back injury and they wouldn't take her.

When we were looking at empty cupboards, no gas for the car, and not being able to pay the phone bill, she started pressuring me to enlist by saying, "If you sign up they'll teach you Arabic," which I wanted to learn but BYU didn't offer it—though I'd taken all of their Hebrew classes. When I said I didn't want to be in the military she gave me the cold treatment so I caved in and agreed to talk to the recruiters. They sold me this big line—most of which, surprisingly, turned out to be true. I signed up for Arab language training, went to basic training, and to Monterey language school to learn Arabic.

Before we get into how you got involved in RVing, when have been your most difficult times and how did you cope? I learned a lot working on farms and ranches because you're often confronted with difficult tasks that it's all on you to resolve. [*Imants Barušs* had a similar experience as a roofer*.] I learned at that point that if you don't know what to do, then you

should stop, look at the situation, think it over, look at your resources, and see what you can bring to bear that makes sense to try to solve the problem. That principle has been hugely valuable for me throughout the rest of my life. Another issue was going on a mission because it's very challenging. None of us like to inconvenience people, but as missionaries, we had to approach people out of the blue. You develop a certain level of courage in the process. You also learn to be as sensitive to other people's desires.

The worst thing was the breakup of my first marriage and that one was tough. I knew my wife wasn't happy and she several times threatened to leave but I did everything I could to try to keep that from happening. When she finally did leave I at least felt like I'd done everything that I could to make it work. Because of her life circumstances at the time, I ended up being a single parent of three little kids for three years. That was another challenge, let me tell you.

Did you get married in the temple? Yes. *So that made it more difficult, right?* Breaking up a marriage for people who are sincere about being married is tough in any case, but when you add marrying in the temple in what you believed would be an eternal relationship, that is even tougher. *You're in your second marriage and married in the temple too?* Yes. W*hen you die who will you live with?* In a case like this, that's up to God to sort out.

When you were in the military, you were recruited to do RVing. You didn't know about it so why did they pick you? I had never put the words *remote* and *viewing* together in my life. By this time I was an officer, done a tour in Germany with the Special Forces, and was at Fort Meade, Maryland as a captain working as a Middle East analyst. I was a bit of a skeptic about ESP. When I was younger, I started off really being fascinated by the topic and had been involved in a junior high science fair project using Zener cards. That project turned out to be a total failure so I concluded it was a nice story but there wasn't anything to ESP.

What I didn't know was that the quarters I was assigned to at Fort Meade—and this may be another case of synchronicity—happened to be next to those of the RV unit's Operations and Training Officer, Captain Fred "Skip" Atwater. Across the street lived one of the viewers who was in the process of being trained, named Tom McNair. They both wore civilian clothes and Tom had a beard. I thought, "That's odd." Some types of

intelligence officers do wear civilian clothes but don't usually live in military quarters with their names on their front doors.

I got to know Fred and Tom and wondered what kind of job they were in because normally in intelligence you'd at least know the discipline such as Signals Intelligence, Imagery Intelligence, or Human Intelligence. I said, "Do you do a lot of traveling?" Tom said, "'Well, sort of." I had no idea what "sort of" meant!

A few weeks later Tom and Skip were in my house and noticed one of my art pieces on the wall. It was a stippled (small dots) drawing of a cat. When they saw it, they looked at each other and said "trackers!" Later they said, "We think you'd be good for what we do." I asked, "What do you do?" They said, "You know we can't tell you that." They asked me to take tests like the Myers-Briggs, MMPI, and others. Apparently, I passed the tests because later Tom called me in and asked me to fill out a nondisclosure form that was more draconian than anything I'd ever done before. He explained, "What we do here is collect intelligence against foreign threats using a parapsychological discipline or skill known as RV. We want to know if you are willing to volunteer to become a psychic spy."

Tom said he would give me time to think it over, but I said, "Never mind, I want to do it." He looked shocked that I decided so easily. As he was talking, I was thinking: I used to be fascinated by ESP but thought there was nothing to it and now he's telling me there is a line item in the federal budget to teach people how to do it. I realized there has to be something to it so there was no way I wasn't going to do it.

Some people think you can teach somebody to RV in 15 minutes while you teach formal workshops and online classes. Can you teach somebody in 15 minutes? You can teach someone to play "twinkle twinkle little star" on the piano in less than 15 minutes. If you want them to learn the ins and outs and to develop the complex skills involved with RVing, then you need to have comprehensive training. Russell Targ* will have an object hidden in a paper bag and people are supposed to RV what's in the bag. That's what Russell is talking about when he says he can teach them in 15 minutes; Stephan Schwartz* pretty much has the same concept as well. People who are really good need a lot of practice; you learn it by trial and error over a period of years to get that good.

Is there some kind of meditation where you step back from the chattering left brain that gets in the way of receiving? How do you get

someone in the frame of mind where they can do RVing? There's what I call generic RVing, which is the kind that people did before the teaching methods were developed. Every one of the viewers had a different way of preparing. Hella Hammid, who was one of the early good RVers, had to have on her magic socks. Pat Price was also an astounding RVer; he always had to polish his glasses before putting them on. They have these little rituals to get them in the mode.

I early on learned to do what we call the "cool-down." I took about 15 to 20 minutes to lie down and put on a mixtape with mostly heavy metal and get to a state where I was sort of mind-awake, body-asleep, on the verge of falling asleep. I found that cool-down thing was a crutch rather than helpful. I've learned in teaching people RVing over the last 20 years that you really don't need that.

The methodology I teach is called "controlled remote viewing," which was developed by the people who created RV in the first place—Ingo Swann and Dr. Harold Puthoff. They developed these methodologies as a way of transferring the skills to novices. It induces that altered stage as you go through the process and serves as its own preparation as you're going through it.

You sit at a table; you have a paper and a pen and go through the process in stages. The first stage is where you get a first glimpse of the target: Is it land, water, a structure, an event, or is it a person? The first stage only lasts around 10 to 20 seconds. Then you merge into stage two where you start getting smells, tastes, textures, temperatures, sounds, visuals, colors, and qualities of light (such as "shiny" or "dim" or "twinkling"). In stage three, you sketch the impressions you get.

Kinesthetic sensing plays a very important role here because often you don't consciously know what you're sketching. When you compare it later, it's often astonishing how closely it matches the target because that information is coming straight from your subconscious into your muscle coordination. You can create without being fully aware of what it is you're doing. The irony here is that even though it's called RVing, if you get a clear image in your head that's nearly always a left-brain construct and it's almost always wrong. We teach people not to trust the images they get but in fact to unpack the data that created that image.

What's an example of something that you RVed that was useful for the military? We did a lot of work targeting narco-traffickers particularly in the

1989 to 1990 time frame. In one case, the joint task force got word from a conventional informant that there was a shipment of contraband coming into a harbor in the United States on a container ship. The informant didn't know what ship it was or where it was going to dock. So they turned to us RVers to try to solve the problem. There were six container ships coming into that harbor on the day in question. I was able to describe the contraband. You start off being blind because they don't want you to know what the target is because that biases you. But nevertheless, I got that description correct. Then they said, "You're right about the contraband, but there are six ships. We don't know which one it is."

I used another methodology called dowsing to determine which one of those six ships was the target, then used it again to indicate where the contraband was on the ship that had hundreds of containers, each one the size of a semi-truck trailer. When they stopped that ship and broke into the cargo, they found a container crammed with contraband. It definitely worked and that was a case where I produced real data that was useful. There were numerous instances where we never got feedback and, of course, a lot of failures. Even when it does work, it doesn't always produce the necessary data.

How do you dowse? We had a diagram of the ship. I slid a ruler across until I felt a tingle, which I've learned to trust, and drew a line. Then I slid ruler in another direction, felt a tingle and drew a line. Somewhere in the proximity of that intersection is where I predicted the contraband would be found and that's exactly where it was found.

What amazes me is RVers can get the target before it is even selected: How does that happen? Nobody knows that; there are lots of hypotheses but no theory. *What about quantum non-locality tells us that entangled particles could influence each other from a distance so that there is some kind of information field?* There are a couple of problems with that. First of all, it happens at a micro-scale at the subatomic particle level. There's been some research that demonstrates that entanglement could happen in a larger scale even up to classical levels.

There's no theory to support the kinds of information that can be transferred in RVing experience. The problem is that entanglement can't deal with time. It can't explain a future prediction, which could be very successful and it can't explain retrocognition, which is a description of things in the past. There is some recent research that shows that

entanglement can recede into the past a little bit but we're talking about micro levels—just picoseconds into the past. It doesn't go back to Pearl Harbor or the Battle of Hastings, both of which I've RVed blindly and produced accurate information about. I just don't see how you could get there with entanglement. *Because a target that hasn't been selected means you're not entangled with it in any way because it's not even there.* There's no "there" there. There will be in the future but entanglement doesn't go into the future.

What about an information field like what the Hindus call the Akashic Records, which allows you to access it as Edgar Cayce did in his many readings? Controlled RVing theory makes use of something called the matrix which is similar to these information fields—but that, of course, is a hypothesis. We don't really have a way of providing evidence that such things exist. My position on RVing is we don't know how it works, but we might as well get value out of it. My personal opinion is that consciousness and physicality are not a subset of the physical world.

Consciousness exists next to physics; it's a primitive existant just like the physical world is a primitive existant. By "primitive," I mean it exists right at the foundations of the universe. Consciousness doesn't depend on the physical world to exist. Some kind of intermixing, some kind of nonlocal connection (but not in the quantum physics sense) between those two, allows these kinds of things to happen and allows us to be conscious.

A third version, which Western philosophies call idealism, is very similar to what Eastern religion believes, which is that the physical world grows out of mind. I don't buy that either; I have a pluralistic belief of how the universe goes together. My view is a step beyond dualism, but shares affinities with it. Essentially, there are many independent existants that exist independently and they interact to some degree. The two major ones are the physical world and consciousness; they don't depend on either one and they're both relevant. Somehow that means there is a nonphysical element to the universe as well as physical, which of course mainstream science rejects. It believes everything is physical or a consequence of physical effects—which we call the doctrine of physicalism. The dirty little secret of the physicalists is that they can't prove their theory.

The "hard problem of consciousness" and the observer effect in quantum mechanics can't be explained by physicalism. That depends on what interpretation of quantum physics you're using. Certain interpretations

include the observer effect while certain ones don't. The observer effect essentially says that any observation affects a thing no matter what scale. If you want to see the writing on the monument in the cemetery that you're exploring after midnight and it's dark, you shine your flashlight on it to observe what's on the pedestal. Those photons from the flashlight impact the monument, so there is an effect there even though it's so small it's not noticeable. If you think about observation at the quantum level, essentially the smallest things we can observe are electrons or photons, which are essentially the same scale. If you're going to observe something you have to be able to "see it."

You have to have something that you project in order to see it, so that's going to affect the thing you're trying to observe in a sort of mechanistic way. In quantum physics, it's more abstruse than this, but observing automatically implies effect. I suggest that sometimes we get carried away with the observer effect. I don't know for sure what the observer effect means for consciousness, but lots of people get carried away drawing conclusions from it.

Do you think there are angels, fallen angels, and other nonphysical entities? In Mormon doctrine, angels can be pre-existent beings, spirits that haven't yet acquired a body; or "post-existing spirits," people who died who are called back to perform a mission in the physical world as a spirit or resurrected beings. As far as fallen angels, we believe there was a war in heaven when a large percentage of God's spirit children rebelled and became the fallen angels.

Have you ever RVed something like an angel? Not to my knowledge and I wouldn't do that intentionally. I don't believe in or condone RVing religious things because RVing isn't 100%: it can often give you false returns. I'd hate to have someone lose their faith—or acquire one—based on a faulty RV exercise. *You wrote that 80% is pretty accurate.* I'd say 70-80% if you have some connection with the target and that's if you're experienced and well-trained; beginners don't do that well.

Let's talk about your published work starting with your dissertation. Why did you decide to get a Ph.D. in philosophy? I always wanted to get an advanced degree and when I retired from the army I applied to work at the NSA but my heart really wasn't in it. They turned me down anyway. My wife was depressed because she hoped I'd get a gainful job when I retired. I started thinking I'm really interested in this mind stuff, RVing, and

consciousness. What's the best discipline as a starting point? Philosophy seems to be where the paradigms begin because it deals with the fundamentals of the universe.

I thought if you want to change the paradigm, you need to know two things. You need to know what's wrong with the old one and what's right with it. Obviously the "old paradigm" we're living with today got a lot right. Lifespan is much longer than it ever has been before. Quality of life is higher for more people than it's ever been before. So if we're going to change it for a better paradigm, we need to know what parts to keep. Philosophy is a great place to begin.

In your dissertation, which is available online, "Is Physicalism 'Really' True?" *what is one of the arguments against materialistic philosophy?*[47] Physicalism says that everything in the universe is physical or a consequence of physical facts. The argument is that the evidence for various kinds of ESP is very strong, despite what the skeptics and mainstream science say. This can't be explained with physical concepts and you can demonstrate that to have these things occur, the causal chain has to go outside of the physical construct in order to work. That is a very powerful counterexample to the claim that everything is physical.

An example you used in your dissertation is presentiment. Presentiment is the idea that you can have an unconscious physiological warning of an unpleasant or frightening event before it happens. They test that with computers displaying randomized calm and disturbing images while you're wired up to autonomic nervous system readouts of various kinds, such as skin conductance, blood pressure, and heart rate. It's been multiply demonstrated that as much as five to seven seconds in advance of an unpleasant event occurring, the body starts preparing for that unpleasant event. That doesn't happen in advance of a pleasant event. *What about being stared at?* Being stared at is a kind of direct mental interaction with living systems. We often get that sensation that we're being observed and catch someone staring at us. Experimental techniques were developed to test this in a laboratory setting and it appears to be a real effect.

Discuss Associative Remote Viewing (ARV) where you want to read the silver market and going up is represented by a banana and going down is a rose or other symbol. ARV is a way of predicting certain kinds of future events. The event has to have an actual possibility of two or more specific outcomes. So, let's say, silver futures: are they going to go up or go down?

You set up a messaging system where, for example, a pencil symbolizes the market going up and a hamburger symbolizes the market going down. The viewer is asked to describe what object he/she will be shown after the market closes. The viewer does not know in advance what the objects are. If the RV results (verbally and sketched) more resemble the object that's associated with one of the outcomes—say the viewer describes something that's long, yellow and pointy—that's how you place your bet. It sounds more like the pencil, so that means the silver futures market is going to close up—which means you buy now while it's lower.

After all, the trading is done and you know which way the silver futures closed, you show the viewer the object that stood for what the market did, thus closing the feedback loop to the past. It's been very successful; lots of people have made fair amounts of money using ARV against the various markets, sporting events, etc. *Have you?* I have done it but it's a lot of work. It also negatively affects your operational RVing ability because it's a very simplistic way of doing RV and it degrades your ability to view much more complex things in an operational setting. My son did a college project with ARV and they more than doubled the money they had in the market. [*See Jeffrey Mishlove,* Stephan Schwartz,* and Russell Targ.**]

When people get bored or get emotionally involved, they're not very accurate. I do teach ARV because there are a lot of people who want to learn. I have found that if the viewer is emotionally invested, if they know how much money is riding on the bet, that can really mess them up. In sports, they call it choking because you know what the consequences are if you screw it up.

You wrote a paper on why ESP is consciousness's only hope. Do you mean that's because it shows that there is something other than the material point of view? That was a talk I gave in response to a presentation that a skeptic had earlier given at the Tucson Consciousness Conference. Susan Blackmore* was the skeptic who said ESP is of no help to consciousness. I said that the evidence for ESP undermines the whole notion of physicalism since people who embrace physicalism believe that consciousness is just a side function of the brain. If ESP is correct, that premise is false because in ESP what you're doing is essentially transcending the brain.

What's the theme of your 2005 book, Reading the Enemy's Mind: Inside Star Gate, America's Psychic Espionage Program*?* It's both a history

of my involvement in RVing and also an overview of the whole history of the program. From the first SRI's RVing experiment all the way up to where it was declassified and some of the shenanigans that happened in the social part of the RV community after that. *It seems like it's so effective; viewers found the new Russian sub, the downed plane in North Africa, etc. It's hard to believe the government is still not using it.* The government ended it because of criticism or, more precisely, fear of criticism. The fact that it wasn't always 100% reliable and that it conflicted with a lot of beliefs was enough for them to kill it. I did some work for an army major command trying to find a missing soldier in Iraq. Those are kind of one-off things that are not sponsored by the government. *Did you find the soldier?* The people who were supposed to use the data on the ground found out what the source was and refused to deal with it.

In 2015 you wrote The Essential Guide to Remote Viewing: The Secret Military Remote Perception Skill Anyone Can Learn. It's a common-sense introduction to RVing, including covering all the major topics to help someone get a basic understanding of RVing; it includes an easy tutorial on how to do a simple viewing, among other things. *Do you have another book you're thinking about?* Which one of the 20 I have in mind? I'm actively working on a couple of things. One of them is a sort of "typical mistakes RVers make and how to avoid them." I'm also a Second Amendment advocate so I'm working on a book on how to support the Second Amendment without alienating your family and friends.

What's an example of a mistake you see RVers make? I find people aren't being fully honest with themselves. Self-honesty is extremely important if you're going to progress in your RVing. I've found people who RV a target and have their results be way off still try to claim the results fit the target whatever way they can. If you want to progress, you have to acknowledge where you got it wrong so next time you have a better chance of doing it right. I see it works the other way too; there are people who refuse to admit when they get it right because they're too self-critical. That gets in the way of progress as well.

You talk about using RVing operationally. Does that mean applying it to finding the missing soldiers, etc.? Operational viewing is finding missing soldiers, helping solve crimes, using RVing in archaeological projects, and it's in its infancy for use in medical situations. "Competitive intelligence" is a new name for industrial espionage or countering it. My group had a

project a while back trying to assess whether a multinational company had infringed on the patents of another multinational. When the data we produced was presented to the infringer, they immediately settled the suit. They apparently felt like we got the goods on them. *Did you get the information in terms of numbers, words, and pictures?* Numbers you usually don't get in RVing but you do get verbal concepts and visual concepts that you represent either in sketching or clay models.

Do you ever hear ESP clairvoyant information audibly? The irony here is you don't hear words but you know them. You may get vague images, shapes, and structures that you put down that are accurate; you often know there has to be something there and you sketch it in. RV impressions often come in like a half-remembered memory, but you know this memory is new. If you learn to identify that kind of experience then your RVing starts to take off. *I do clairvoyant sessions with people on the phone that I've never met and that's how information comes: like a vague impression, a feeling. I think we're just reading an information field.* That's at least a good model we can use. Whether that's true or not, who knows? But we have to have a way of thinking about it.

How have you dealt with all the skepticism and resistance? You have to be a brave person willing to swim against the stream to do this kind of work. I've found that being prepared is helpful. I encourage people who might engage with doubters to have some "scripts" ready at hand; that is, prepared answers of information that they have researched and thoroughly learned in advance. I have an elevator pitch for when the topic of RVing comes up with someone who has never heard of it before, for example. When I'm interacting with skeptics, I usually get familiar with many of the skeptical arguments and the counter-arguments. Skeptics live in their own little world and they think there are no counter-arguments because their arguments are so good you can't counter them, when in fact their arguments are often very lame.

It goes partly back to my army training, where, in a combat environment they have what they call immediate action drills because if you run into the enemy its often under unexpected circumstances. If you have to stop and think about what you're going to do, you're going to get annihilated. They try to teach you every possible kind of engagement or defensive scenario for whatever you might encounter. You identify the situation and immediately have a plan. For example, I've been interested in

studying mass shootings. People often freeze and then you're immediately a target in a setting like that. *It would be better to drop?* Sometimes it's better to dodge behind cover, find concealment, or drop. In so many cases people freeze because they have not been trained or conditioned to act.

Regarding the world situation with these kinds of mass shootings, an increasing number of autocrats, global warming, and jeopardy to the environment, are you optimistic or pessimistic when you think about our human future? The media is largely responsible for the pessimism we have today. In our brains, we have more processing mechanisms for bad news than we do for good. We tend to pay more attention to bad news, which is why the balance of news in the public media is skewed towards negative news—although there probably is more good news that happens. We've evolved to focus on the negative news because that's what can reach out and bite us. The media capitalizes on that because negative news drives ratings. So we think the world is worse off than it is.

Overall lifespan in the world is far greater than it was even just 50 years ago. More people have food sufficiency than have ever had in the history of the world. We have more diseases under control today. If you look at conflict, there are no worldwide conflicts unless you count the global war on terror and the conflicts that do exists are relatively low-scale with relatively low causality rates. There is probably a higher level of peace today than there ever has been before. Overall I think our future is very promising but you wouldn't know it from the news reports we are hammered with every day.

Even with global warming, where we have a decade before it's irreparably damaging? I think global warming is a real thing. I'm a Republican but I disagree with a lot of my Republican friends about things like global warming. The problem is if you look at the history of scientific predictions as to what's going to happen in the future, it's got an abysmal record. I think we will get that turned around but we'll see. I do worry about technology. It's been a blessing and a curse, an absolute godsend and an absolute disaster. A lot of our social problems today are caused by the Internet, particularly among our younger generations. The suicide rate among youth is aided and abetted by the Internet.

Also, I'm worried about AI and robotics. If they come together the way people predict, it may mean a huge reduction in job opportunities in the world and may prove to be very socially destructive. Regarding global

warming, technology may solve that quicker than we think. Technology could be our salvation but it could also be our destruction if we're not careful.

Have you RVed the future like Stephan Schwartz?* I do predict the future on those occasions when I do ARV. I've had some success with predicting the future in other ways but also a lot of failures. I don't think you can, with very great success, RV the future and be accurate, except in the case of ARV.

There are so many possibilities and variables. RVing the present or the past if you're decently accomplished has a roughly 60-80% success, but when you try to RV open future events it plummets down to 5% if you're lucky. If you're RVing a future outcome that is narrowly predictable (as in ARV) it's just as successful as present or past. When you get outside of the narrow prediction range such as trying to predict where the next terrorist attack will be, those targets don't have any good track record at all. The future is a bunch of possibilities, so you may get the wrong one.

What do you do for fun and health maintenance? What I'm doing is fun. When I was at Fort Meade, I hated the weekends because it meant I had to stay home. Later, after I had a bunch of more conventional office jobs, I loved the weekends. I love my job and I love what I do now. My wife is always accusing me of putting 10lbs of flour in a 5lb bag. I play guitar and I'm trying to get back into watercolors. I love traveling and sightseeing; where I live we're within a half day's drive from seven major national parks. We're an hour from Zion National Park, an hour and a half from Bryce Canyon. I love to fish and shoot and Utah is a great place for those activities. Of course, I love family, I've got seven brothers and sisters, four kids and all of that keeps me busy, plus church. Notoriously Mormons are very active in volunteer projects.

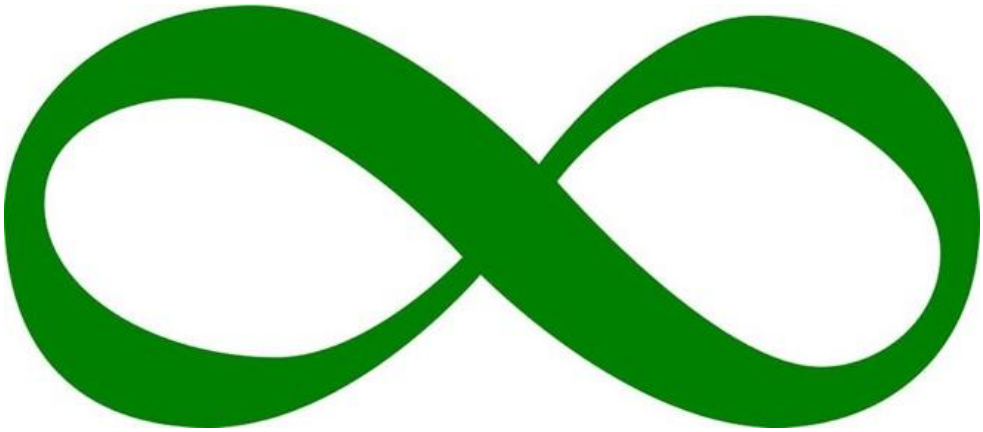
Books

Reading the Enemy's Mind: Inside Star Gate, America's Psychic Espionage Program, 2005

The Essential Guide to Remote Viewing: The Secret Military Remote Perception Skill Anyone Can Learn, 2015

Section Four

Mind Matter Interaction



Mary Rose Barrington, M.A., Solicitor

Material Reality as Actualized by Psychic Force

1926-2020 Photo by Aileen

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What convinced Mary Rose Barringon that retrocognition exists?

What's her alternative theory for childrens' memories of past lives and poltergeists?

What's her theory about why material things can disappear, telepathy, and thus about the composition of reality?

I was born in London on the 31st of January, 1926. *Do you identify with being an Aquarian? It certainly is a visionary sign.* I think so, because of my general curiosity and I've got a lot of other things in Aquarius too, but I don't take it seriously. *What about your birth order?* I have an older brother, nearly five years older.

What was there about your family that led you to go to Oxford? My parents were ambitious for me. *In those days, wasn't it unusual for a young woman to become a barrister?* I didn't have in mind being a barrister. I read English at Oxford because I was good at it and I found it easy. I wanted to go into science but I had weakness in the eyes and was advised that I must study something I found very easy and not work for too many hours a day. I am afraid that made it English.

Did you go to boarding school? Susan Blackmore said it was like being in prison with all the rules and regulations. Did you find it that way?* No, I quite enjoyed it. I had read books my older brother read that included a lot of schoolboy stories; it all sounded great fun. I expected to enjoy it and I did. I don't mind a few rules and regulations but I probably broke a lot of them. *About what percentage of Oxford students were women?* Only about 5%. There were five colleges for women—the fifth was just coming into existence—and women didn't attend any of the men's colleges although we were expected to join in societies, choirs, orchestras, etc.

What was your family's religious orientation? My parents were from Jewish backgrounds but did not like religion. Although they never talked about religion to me or to my brother, they sent us to schools with Church of England foundations so we would be completely English. They came from New York and my father was very keen to be thoroughly English. I never believed a word of any religion ever but I enjoyed singing hymns.

How did you get from studying English to being a barrister? It was rather by mistake because we were doing a lot of house hunting when we were moving from the country to London. I decided I wanted to be an estate agent and spend my life going around other people's houses. We were friendly with a county court judge who advised me, "Oh my dear, to learn property law you need to be with law students rather than builders," so I took his advice and got diverted into law. You see how very accidental my life has been; intended for science, did English because I was advised to, and fell into law. *Did you meet a husband along the way?* No, it never quite coincided, the one I wanted and the one who wanted me were never the same.

How did you get interested in psi to the point where you became the President of the Oxford University Society for Psychical Research? Again following my older brother, he was very keen on ghost stories and the paranormal. When I first heard about what Christians call the Holy Ghost, I was very intrigued, so I asked my nanny what on earth it was but she didn't know. When I was around 15, in the great Blackwell's book shop, I saw a section called "occult," and of course I went straight to that. I saw a big book called *Survival of Man* and thought that was very intriguing because I didn't like the idea that when my parents died, that was it. Actually, the book was a very thorough survey by Sir Oliver Lodge about the evidence stacked up by psychical research, including telepathy and retrocognition. I was very impressed by the book and realized this is what I wanted to do with my life.

When I got to Oxford and looked on the board to see about all the wonderful societies, there was a Society for Psychical Research. I went straight into that and learned a lot because of two of the very knowledgeable members who both became physics professors in top American universities. That was a very active three years but it took me about 10 more years to realize that ordinary people like me could join the national Society for Psychical Research. It has been the main interest of my life.

Before we get into your research, how have you remained so healthy and alert at 93? I am afraid I eat what I fancy. It's amazing I am still alive. Actually, I haven't eaten meat for about fifty years but I am afraid you can see me at tea time guzzling the cakes. I don't give advice; besides, I am falling to pieces. I walk with a stick and not very far, and my memory is not

very good. I am not here for long. I am a member of the Euthanasia Society and I firmly believe in exiting yourself when you think you are no longer any use. I don't think you can congratulate yourself on longevity because it's luck. [*Sadly, she passed on in February 2020.*]

I am asking interviewees about their most difficult challenges and how they've coped. I haven't really had many difficulties and I've had a very nice sort of life. I suppose my greatest difficulty now is really having so little sight; the world is bright around me but I don't see much detail. I find that a very big challenge.

Did your work colleagues think that it was an odd phenomenon that you were doing this kind of research? Probably, but not offensively. After some years, I became an almshouse charity administrator and part-time solicitor where I spent quite a lot of time in court, which can be very stimulating and sometimes amusing work. I've always looked on my main focus as being psychical research, but I got paid for my real work, the opposite of psychical research.

Doing psychical research, did you also experience phenomena like synchronicity, ESP, or precognitive dreams? For the first 30 years, I experienced absolutely nothing, including when I joined the London Society for Psychical Research. I suppose I am one of the few people who actually joined entirely because of what I read in books and was convinced by the evidence of other people. Decades later it was quite exciting when I heard very loud knocks on the back wall of my house after I had spent the day talking to Anita Gregory, a well-known psychical researcher. We'd been organizing some experiments with the medium and healer Matthew Manning, talking about that all day. Then we had tea in the conservatory with another resident of the house who didn't like psychical research. He thought it was the work of the devil, so we didn't talk about our work.

In the midst of an awkward silence, we suddenly heard incredible knocks on the wall as if somebody had taken a sledgehammer and whacked the brick wall. I ascribed it to a poltergeist-prone woman who badly wanted to get in touch with me in connection with a legal property problem. I don't get hunches and telepathic messages and when I go to meet people, I have an amazing way of missing them. So I am quite convinced of most paranormal phenomena without much personal experience.

You wrote a book together with Ian Stevenson and Zofia Weaver about Stefan Ossowiecki. Why him? His name is pronounced OSS-OFF-

YET-ski, a great Polish clairvoyant. He was one of the very few people who could be relied on demonstrate his clairvoyance almost to order. Clairvoyance is the output of your unconscious and he had an extraordinary avenue from his conscious to his unconscious. If you gave him a token of something lost, he could be relied on to tell you where it was. People came to him during WWII to find soldiers who had gone missing.

My favorite anecdote about him is supported by independent evidence. A judge's wife lost a brooch from her coat and went to Ossowiecki. He said, "I see it. It fell off on the corner of the street, and a man with black moustache picked it up, but I am afraid I don't know where it is now." The next day, when he went into his bank, he saw the man who admitted that he had the brooch and so the lady got it back. Almost everything he talks about in his autobiography turns out to be verified by independent persons. In another example, Charles Richet (French Nobel Prize winner in physiology) in an experiment, wrote something on paper and threw it in the fire, Ossowiecki went back retrocognitively to the point in time when Richet put the writing on the paper. I think retrocognition is the most fascinating thing I have ever been convinced about because it means that in some sense the past is still there and can be viewed.

Do you have any theories about what mechanism allows someone like him to read the past? Is this quantum physics? I think reading the past is affected by an abnormal faculty, a bit like the way a savant (as portrayed in the film *Rain Man*) can do lightning calculations with extraordinary arithmetical sums.

Your co-author Ian Stevenson is famous for his research on children's memories of their previous lives. How did you get in touch with Stevenson in Virginia and what did you learn about his research? Stevenson was one of the greatest researchers. He often came to London and so I got to know that he was impressed with Osswiecki and so was I. He put out the idea to the SPR to have Ossowietcki's autobiography translated and Zofia Weaver made a translation. Our book made use of this and other material. As to "cases of the reincarnation type," Stevenson's neutral term (and the title of his 2003 book), assuming survival of some sort, I prefer the idea of overshadowing that someone from the past wants to live again through some unformed mind. It's easier to overshadow and put your memories into a child and have a new experience of life through that child who thinks they are his or her own memories and identifies with the other shadow. It's like

lucid dreams in which you remember who you were and try to relive that life.

Do you believe that the spirit continues after death but probably isn't reincarnated into another body? That's what I hope rather than believe. I have absolutely no doubt that something like telepathy happens between living people because I am convinced by the evidence. But as to what happens when you die, you can interpret the evidence in so many different ways. It could be that a medium has access to knowledge about "communicators" by retrocognition.

You've done research about poltergeists, the noisy ghosts. Do you think those are deceased spirits? I think that the phenomenon is initiated by living people. It could be that living people attract dead people or spirits. An example is the Dixon poltergeist, around 1900, when a 14-year-old girl started her first job as the maid. Bells would ring from walls, which terrified the cook and the maid herself. Later a full poltergeist spectrum of bangs and knocks occurred, along with the bells. It's all well to talk about PK moving dice and small things but what sort of psychic force rings bells and moves furniture?

Does that relate to JOTT, Just One of Those Things? Yes, it's also my favorite subject since I've had this experience of things that I put in a certain place and I know that's where I put them, and they're gone. There was a very definite place in the top left-hand desk drawer, where I put a little red cash accounting book. When I went to pay my assistant, it wasn't there. For some reason, we turned our eyes back and there it was sitting in the drawer. *What might be moving the objects*? They are not moving, they are dematerializing because the mind that supports their materialized existence withdraws its attention.

Going back to fundamentals, I posit the idea that material reality—the cosmos and all that is in it—is composed of mindstuff, an inseparable amalgam of mind and matter. When mindstuff components are awake, they are in their mind state, alert and joined up like an oceanic consciousness. In their matter state, they are asleep and inert, dependent on mind to determine their status as particle-like or as protentional. Only in their particle state are they actual, that is visible and tangible. In their protentional state, they are de-actualized, although still existent.

If our unconscious minds, which determine the state of actuality that we experience as normal life, blot something out of mind, it disappears. By

a reverse process, we can bring it back, though not always in the right place. In its awake, alert, fluid mind state, a unit of mind can join with other minds, whereas matter is always separate. It's like the difference between ice and water.

The mind organizes the matter and since we are part of that mind, we can configure the matter to fit with our concept of reality, which is that anything that happens must be consistent with anything that precedes it—everything must be absolutely sequential. If you follow that system, you get the world around us. It's perfectly stable because you don't change the past, and the future has to be consistent with it, and that is our familiar reality. When something nonconforming happens that is not sequential, it's paranormal: If it is sequential, then it is not paranormal. You can go much further down this route of "allowing" the non-sequential to occur as by holding a séance and deliberately flouting the law of sequentiality. Then you may get chaos breaking out.

So it's not some kind of entity moving the red book around? Rather, It happens through some kind of consciousness shift? Yes, and it can be inadvertent, as in a failure to concentrate your unconscious mind on what it should be doing to maintain the environmental reality. Sometimes it might be that it wants to block something out for your advantage. People are always having this experience with reading glasses and sometimes find them in the most bizarre places, when perhaps you are straining your eyes. When things go missing, sometimes it's because it may teach you something. Your subconscious can do things to you that your conscious is not very keen to have done.

Does that mean if I'm not in my bedroom, my bed vanishes? The universal telepathic network keeps things going, which may be sharpened by the immediate observer, who has to overcome the remote influence, which readily gives way. *You explained in your book* Talking About Psychical Research *that JOTT:*

> *...point to an underlying reality entirely different from the one we find ourselves in ... nothing is as it seems to be and we go through life as if hypnotized into experiencing a solidly materialist world ... it is not as if, but we are, in fact, under a quasi-hypnotic command to imagine, construct, and experience our environment in accordance with instructions emanating from*

the control center of a comprehensive mind encompassing our universe.

You worked on committees that investigated spontaneous cases. What are they? Anything that's not experimental, things that just happen to people. My knocks on the wall were spontaneous cases. One of my favorite telepathy stories is about H.M. Stanley, the explorer. While roving around in some distant country, he knew that his nanny from his childhood had just died. An acquaintance of mine was giving a lecture and about 10 minutes before it was due to stop, she suddenly knew that something awful had happened at home. She found out her brother had crashed his car.

What about your 2019 book Talking about Psychical Research*?* It's a collection of talks that I have given over the years. I link telepathy at the receiving end to PK by the person at the emitting end, in whose mind the transferred material originates. This unites a mental effect with a physical stimulus, although they are usually kept in separate boxes. I came to the conclusion that the unconscious mind of the sender is doing most of the work. I speculate that telepathy is a remote form of PK impinging on your mind. The telepathic material that travels best is commands, since telling people to do something is more effective than giving them information that might lead them doing it.

I came to this conclusion from reading about the experiments carried out in France with hypnotists, witnessed by Frederick Myers, who reported very successful telepathically delivered commands made by hypnotists to servants, such as to open windows when it was snowing. *Did the servants know that they were to receive these commands?* They knew that the professor must have been up to his tricks again when they realized what they'd done. These telepathic experiments worked like clockwork so I deduce from that, that what travels best are orders to carry out and that fits in with a model of PK.

It also fits in with remote healing. I suggest that hypnosis, healing, and PK are all interrelated in a psychic force. *So that means that thoughts have some kind of power?* Yes, if they are exteriorized by PK. Physical and mental that come together in the raw material of our reality. *So that explains why someone can do voodoo and cast a spell and the person gets ill because thoughts have power.* Yes, through PK.

Some people use the word "consciousness" to talk about what you call mind. Your conscious mind is just you but underneath is the seething unconscious that knows so much more, including material acquired by telepathy. I think there must be a network of people with whom you are in tune and probably you have a lot of telepathic knowledge that never gets anywhere near your conscious mind because you have a natural valve that stops it. *Some people view the brain as a filter.* Yes, of course, we would go mad if everything from the unconscious flooded into our conscious minds.

When you've heard skeptics say that psi phenomenon is based on hallucination or fraud, what do you think are their best arguments that psi phenomenon really doesn't exist? That view can only be held by people who are not prepared to look at the evidence and fail to grasp that psychical research is the study of things that actually happen, whether or not they ought to happen according to beliefs, however justifiable those beliefs may be. Science is based entirely on sequentiality and it doesn't cope with non-sequentiality at all.

I am switching gears now to ask you what do you do for amusement, for charging your batteries? When I had better sight I used to play the cello in amateur string quartets. That I suppose is one of the high points of my life. Also, *s*inging in the choir. In my young days, games and tennis and riding. I'm pretty potty about dogs and cats. I hope, without much confidence, that when I have "'crossed to the other side" I can find my childhood pony. *People with NDEs report dogs and cats greeting them so I don't know why you can't have a pony. Maybe you have lucid dreams in which you go back, activated like on YouTube.*

Do you think that, socially, politically, environmentally things have gotten worse or better? The good news is that medicine and dentistry have definitely got better. We don't have such bad poverty, at least in this country, as we had when I was young. The convenience of computers and emails is wonderful until you see people glued to their telephone screens. It's wonderful to be able to drive your car to a remote-spot, but then the problem is spoiling them. When I was young there were more open spaces, more gardens and no one worried about global warming.

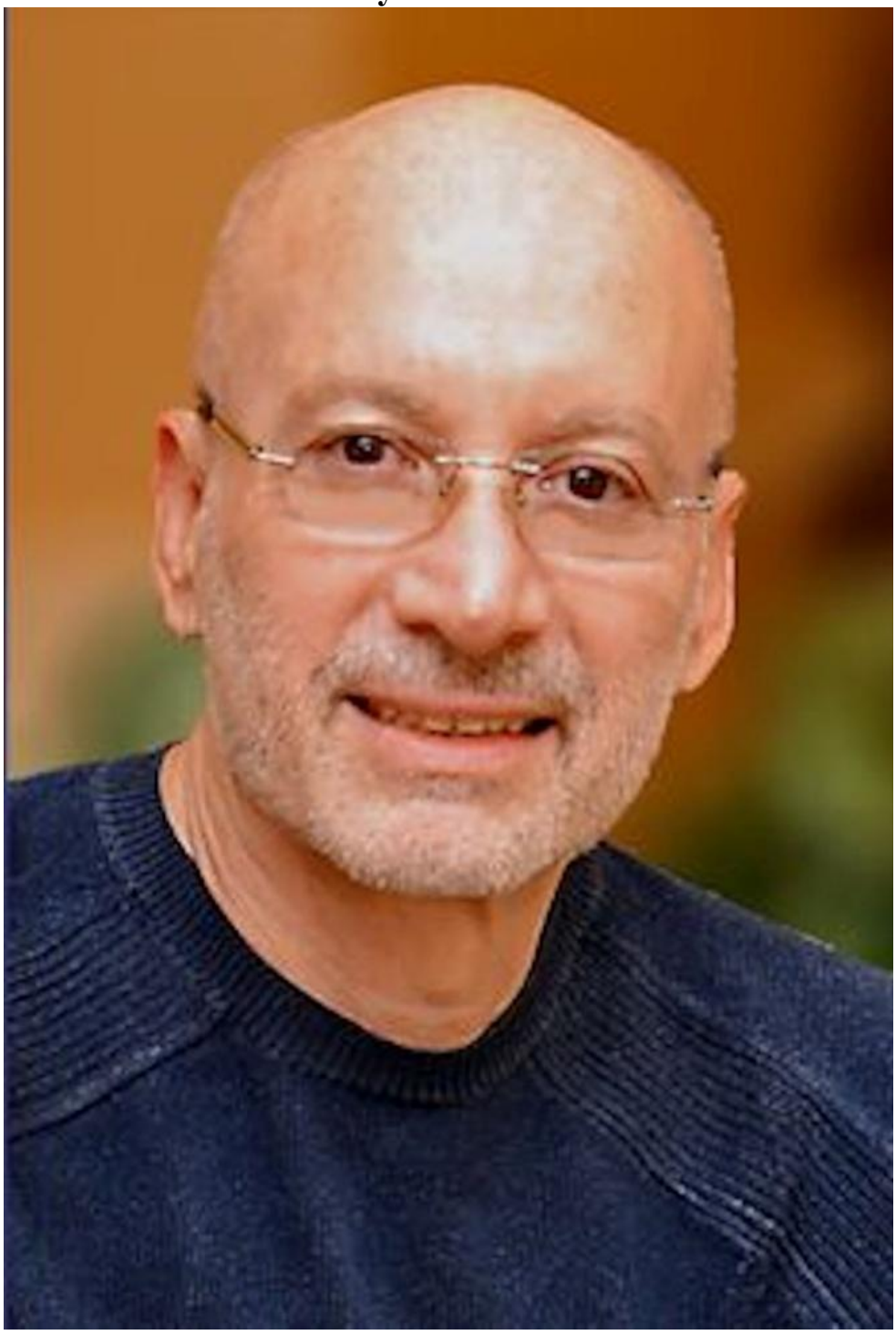
Books

A World In A Grain Of Sand: The Clairvoyance Of Stefan Ossowiecki, with Ian Stevenson and Zofia Weaver, 2005

JOTT: When Things Disappear, 2018
Talking About Psychical Research, 2019

Stephen Braude, Ph.D.

Psychokinesis



Photograph by Jon Braude

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Why does Dr. Braude focus his research on extraordinary people, rather than doing lab research like ESP studies?

What did he learn from studying people with multiple personalities, Dissociative Identity Disorder?

I was born in Las Vegas of all places in 1945. *Gina, your wife, is an astrologer, so you must know something about your astrological type.* Gina tells me that I'm a classic Aries. I'm not an expert on astrology but it has to do with how reactive I am and how combative I am. I apparently have the facial type of an Aries, but I take her word for that. I'm the oldest child of three.

You've studied in London, you've worked on the East Coast and the Southwest. How are you shaped by being born in the West? I lived in Las Vegas for less than a year. We moved to Ohio after the war ended and 66 years later, I retired and returned to the scene of the crime. Apart from the cosmic completeness of going back to where I started, it's a great place to retire. There's no state income tax, good property values, and it's sunny 330 days out of the year. So life is a constant struggle against the relentless optimism produced by all that sunshine. I was an undergraduate when I was in London and found English philosophers were a bit different from the American philosophers who I had been acquainted with at the time. They were more interested in scoring points and being clever than really getting at the truth.

What was there about your childhood that led you to be a philosopher? Nothing in my family helped for that. I discovered philosophy as an undergraduate and had to make a choice between a career of philosophy and a career in music. I figured one was clearly more stable than the other and if I went into philosophy, I might have a job I couldn't get fired from quite so easily and it wouldn't prevent me from being a musician. That's how it worked out. *You're a jazz pianist and composer?* Yes. *Do you still compose and play?* Not as much as I used to. I'm having some physical issues at this stage in my life so I'm not playing as much as I used to.

What did your family teach you about spirituality and religion? I didn't even know the word spirituality at that time. My mother was a very assimilated Jew. My father was converting from being an orthodox Jew to try to live with my mother and he wanted me to go through all the usual paces such as a Bar Mitzvah. But he never really conveyed to me any reason for why I should be interested in Judaism. I went to a religious school, the usual training for a Bar Mitzvah that I completely forgot about.

I'm assuming that you developed an interest in spirituality? Is that correct? I always have trouble with that question because I don't know what is meant by spirituality. I think it's a very amorphous concept. *It's different from everything that is material.* That's clearly not what spirituality means; there are various anti-materialist philosophies that wouldn't count as spiritual in anything like the sense in which that term is used today. Anyway, my family had nothing to do with these matters. In my early days as a philosophy student and a professional philosopher, I still adhered to a kind of glib materialist philosophy. I thought that was the thing to do if I was to be appropriately tough-minded. But a particular experience shook me out of my complacency.

It was a slow day in Northampton, Massachusetts and a couple of friends said let's play this game called "Table Up." What they meant was: let's have a séance. For the next three hours in broad daylight with my own table, I watched my table tilt up and down in the air, our fingers just lightly touching the top, standing next to the table. It was rising under our fingers and spelled out answers in response to questions. None of us knew that the usual way of getting messages through table tilting was to ask yes or no questions and have the table tilt say once for yes or twice for no.

What my friends did was have the table nod once for the letter A, twice for the letter B, three times for the letter C. That's why our table-up session lasted three hours. It didn't convert me to anything in particular at that time and I knew I couldn't discuss it with my mentors. So I literally put it out of mind until I finished my Ph.D., got a job in philosophy, did some respectable work in philosophy of time and language and got tenure.

With the security allegedly afforded by tenure, I remembered this incident that happened back in grad school. I figured if I was a responsible philosopher and intellectual, I needed to look seriously into this. I knew at that time that some major philosophers had studied the evidence from

parapsychology and taken it seriously. So I read what they had to say and I decided there was something worth sinking my teeth into.

We allegedly contacted three entities, one claimed to be John Wayne who had recently died. Another claimed to be the mythical River Styx (so I don't think that was a legitimate communication), and the third one claimed to be someone whose name spelled out Horace T. Jecum. I figured I could go down to city hall and find out if there was a Horace Jecum who built the spooky 18th-century house that I lived in. But it turned out the house was so old it antedated city records, so I never did find out. The whole thing scared the hell out of me and I had no idea at the time who was causing the table to rise. I was sure my friends were not playing a practical joke, that was not their style, it was broad daylight and I could see easily what was happening. So I didn't know whether I was responsible, whether we all were responsible psychically, or whether this other entity was responsible.

In hindsight, after writing about PK and studying it, what's your explanation of why that happened? It was probably one or more of us at the table. No evidence came through that was verifiable to prove we had a legitimate communication. I'd say what happened is similar to what happened in the famous Canadian Philip group experiments which were a kind of PK by committee. In 1972, a group of parapsychologists in Toronto invented a fictitious character named Philip and gave him a detailed history in the 17th century, and spent time absorbing the story they'd created. They then got communications ostensibly from Philip. Interestingly they got very firm answers through raps on the table when the people involved knew what the answer should be. When the question was one that didn't have a definite answer, the raps were relatively tenuous and faint.

The raps are physical, as is table moving, so what explains the unconscious effect on physical movement? You have to be careful supposing there is an underlying mechanism for that. I think that's the standard maneuver in science and unfortunately, it's the standard maneuver in parapsychology. Most scientists assume that you can't break down phenomena in terms of underlying processes forever. You can't expect analytic explanations to go on forever. An analytic explanation is, for example, explaining heat in terms of molecular motion—that is, in terms of some underlying process or set of processes. At some point most scientists agree sooner or later you're going to come to some ground-level primitive phenomenon and at that point, it no longer makes sense to ask how they

occur. That's just the way the universe works and nothing deeper explains why. These are primitive, basic, fundamental phenomena. Now I think that's fine; otherwise, we'd face an infinite regress of analytic explanations.

The problem is that most scientists assume that wherever these primitive phenomena are, they're always at the level of the very small—for example, the atomic, subatomic, neurological, biochemical, level, and never at the observable level. But that's just an article of faith. It's not an empirically established fact and there are good philosophical reasons for thinking that in the realm of psychology, primitive phenomena are at the observable level, with no mechanism underneath. While there may be processes that mediate the phenomena, there's nothing deeper that analyzes it. *Ruth Kastner* suggested that there's space-time and underneath that is kind of a substratum that's not bound by space or time. Does that fit?* I don't see how it helps us get a grip on analyzing PK or analyzing most psychological regularities.

What have been your most difficult challenges and how have you coped? Probably getting out of two bad marriages but I'm not sure I care to discuss this. *Would you say that you learned from them?* I learned you should never marry someone who's listed in the Guinness World Records under consecutive insults. *But you're happy with Gina?* Yes, I'm a very lucky guy. *Maybe it's not luck but rather you learned from your previous experiences.* Yes, it could be.

Has it been difficult being a researcher in parapsychology in terms of your professional reputation? Oh, yes, I've taken a great deal of abuse. On the other hand, it's a little bit like getting a divorce in that you find out things about people that you wouldn't know otherwise. Some philosophers whom I expected to be open-minded and very flexible in their thinking turned out to be surprisingly rigid and condescending, while others whom I expected to be rigid and condescending turned out to be surprisingly open-minded and welcoming. So, I had a much clearer picture of my colleagues after getting into parapsychology than I did beforehand.

Do you think people over the decades have become more open-minded? I haven't seen any large-scale change as I look over the history of parapsychology. The situation is pretty much what it was 150 years ago. *Academics are still told don't go into this field because it'll kill your chance of getting promotion, tenure, etc.* Don't do it before tenure for sure. It

retarded my promotion to full professor at one point until the research quality won out.

Something as mainstream as Wikipedia makes a big point of attacking brilliant scientists like Dean Radin for doing "pseudoscience."* I think psi phenomena are scary. For example, ESP threatens the potential privacy of our thought processes. But PK is perhaps most scary of all. If I can move a pencil a millimeter by thought alone, it's a very small step conceptually from doing that to making somebody drop dead by thought alone. The existence of any PK at all forces us to take seriously a kind of magical worldview that most of us associate usually condescendingly with so-called primitive cultures.

It's a world where we might need to take responsibility for a range of things that most of us would just assume we're bystanders for. If I have a nasty thought about somebody and that person has an accident, in developed countries we aren't comfortable with the idea that our thoughts might have had something to do with that accident. Granted there are parts of the world where people take that sort of thing as a matter of course. They erect psychic defenses and so on, but it doesn't go down well in developed countries.

I think they're cases where people died because they were the victim of a voodoo curse. In the Caribbean and Africa, there's a lot of belief in that. People don't want to leave their hair or fingernail clippings around because someone could use it to make a spell that would harm them. Are there actual cases where people died because of a curse? People could be scared shitless and put themselves in harm's way unconsciously. We undermine our lives in a variety of ways. *Like being way overweight or smoking?* Or getting into a bad marriage. *I call it a learning experience.*

I've often said that most parapsychologists should be studying lucky and unlucky people, especially unlucky people. There's an old Yiddish distinction between a *schlemiel* and a s*chlimazel*. The former is someone who spills soup on himself and a schlimazel has it spilled on him. The idea is that a schlimazel is an unlucky soul, somebody who's a victim of impersonal forces or the world at large. Not only was I married to a schlimazel, her entire family was a family of schlimazels, like lightning rods for misfortune. I also lived next door to a family like that. Everything they bought was defective. Their cars were always in the shop even though they had brands noted for their reliability. Electronic equipment would fail

to work right out of the box. Their infant son was placed on a brand new, solid rocking chair that broke within two days of ownership.

Is it that they expect bad luck, so they attract it? There are two scary possibilities. One is that somebody is doing it to them like their weird philosopher next-door neighbor or that they're doing it to themselves in the same way that people can make themselves sick with psychosomatic ailments. It could be an expression of their own self-hatred. There are all sorts of potentially deep psychodynamic explanations of why this is happening. One of the things we don't really understand about psychic functioning is what its natural history is and how it functions on a day-to-day level. To get a grip on that you need to find conspicuous manifestations of it. In the case of car crashes, you can't tell whether it's caused normally or by someone's PK. But if you find somebody who exhibits some sort of psychic regularity like a good psychical medium or people who are remarkably unlucky then you might be able to get a grip on how psi is working in everyday life.

When people talk about synchronicity it usually means a positive thing, so your examples are an interesting flip side of the coin. Sure. *So what it really tells us is that our thought processes are magnetic in a way and attract that which we focus on.* I think to some extent we influence our lives in a variety of ways. What we don't know is what the limits of that influence can be. That's why I titled one of my books *The Limits of Influence.* We don't know just how extensive or how refined our everyday psychic functioning can be. In the lab, what we get is straight-jacketed psychic functioning. It's like expecting someone to be courageous or creative under laboratory conditions. It's idiotic.

In terms of applying these concepts to doing psi research, are you saying we really don't know the process by which these psi phenomena work so let's not do it until we do? Or are you saying we just need to acknowledge our ignorance? In my opinion, laboratory research is almost absurdly premature because we don't know what kind of ability we're taking from life and trying to study it in a lab. We recognize in day-to-day kinds of ways that there are certain things people do that can't be properly studied under laboratory conditions. If you want to study a tennis player's ability to return serves you must see how he or she plays in the actual context of the game when opponents are trying their hardest to win. We don't know whether psychic functioning is like athletic abilities or musical

abilities which are very situation sensitive and which are constrained in a variety of ways. We don't understand what human abilities are, period, and yet we're trying to take psi into a lab and study it as if we can harness it.

Not only that, we can't even do properly controlled experiments in parapsychology. How do you control for a PK experiment? You can't go around with a PK meter and try to see where the lines of force are. Laboratory researchers in parapsychology behave as if everybody involved in a psi experiment is going to adhere to a kind of idiotic gentlemen's agreement where only the official subject will use the psychic ability being tested for and then only when the experimenter's gun goes off—that is, at the appointed starting time, and that nobody else even remotely connected with the experiment will use whatever psychic abilities they might have to further whatever unconscious or conscious goals they might have. And there's no way to control for that.

Furthermore, experimenters are probably going to be much more heavily invested in the outcome of the experiment than the subjects, no matter how interesting the experiment might be for them. Controlling for experimenter psi effects is something that's almost impossible to do. That's why I've studied apparent superstars who manifest psychic abilities under a variety of different conditions. Even if they're not the only ones contributing to the phenomena, at least we have a good *prima facie* case for saying they have some involvement in this. *Such as remote viewers like Joseph McMonagle who had fantastic, consistent results.* Yes, and with great physical mediums like D. D. Home, Eusapia Palladino, or the Gold Leaf Lady. *You write about them.*

In terms of the lab research like Ganzfeld studies, they get more than 24% that would be expected by chance. The results are consistently above chance for RV, for all kinds of ESP, for precognition about the negative slide that's coming up, so they do get results in the labs. Yes but they're still functionally ambiguous. We don't really have a good grip on what's going on and whose psi is contributing to the final results. So it's very hard to do process-oriented studies of those kinds of phenomena. They're also unconvincing in the sense that they don't really persuade the not-yet-persuaded about the reality of psi. The academic community, for example, hasn't been moved away substantially from its long-standing snarky skepticism by accumulating experimental evidence of psi, or by meta-

analyses. In fact, the same sorts of glib skeptical arguments are being trotted out decade after decade after decade.

That's because the skeptics don't usually read the research. That's part of it but even when they read the research they'll say, "We just know this is impossible," or stupid things like C.E.M. Hansel's remark: "If someone wants to demonstrate that they have telepathic abilities they just have to tell me what I'm thinking." If I said to Hansel, "Let's see a penile erection." and he couldn't perform, I'm sure he'd resist the conclusion that he's just unable to get it up. *Is it fair to say that lab research does get statistically significant results, but we don't know exactly what we're measuring?* I'm more comfortable with that, yes.

What about your personal experiences of synchronicity? You write that there's a lot of confusion about Jung's concept of synchronicity. Jung was confused about what causality was. He seemed to think that the only kind of causal connections were billiard ball-type connections, where the cause is immediately prior in space and time to its effect. So, he thought ESP would be acausal. That's just confused. Secondly, he thought that synchronicity's meaningful coincidences were somehow built into nature, that nature brought events together in terms of their intrinsic meaningful relations. But events are not intrinsically meaningful or meaningless.

Meaning is something that's relative to a particular agent, a particular mind, a set of intentions in a context. So the only way to make meaning intrinsic to nature is to posit God as the originator of the cosmic perspective that determines which things are meaningful. But that's not what Jung wanted to say. He was really deeply confused about this. That's why I say that the most plausible analysis of synchronicity is that there are really non-random coincidences that we're bringing about ourselves. *It's not some intelligence in nature, it's our chemistry, so to speak?* I don't know what you mean by "chemistry." It's our paranormally caused arrangement of events in ways that feel mysterious and numinous.

As a philosopher, I'm going to ask you to define consciousness although people don't like it when I ask them that. I also don't like it. It's a fuzzy and elastic term. I would be reluctant to give it a definition. *But this whole phenomenon of a new paradigm, which is really very old in terms of idealism, is about consciousness underlying material manifestation. We've got to define consciousness because it's a pivotal concept in defining the new paradigm*. It could all be done more clearly than it's been done now.

We don't even know what materialism means for God's sake. What used to count as materialism, what counts as material now?

Like electrons and photons aren't really material? No, they are material but there was a time when material meant just solid bodies and then things got smaller and smaller and now we're talking about units of matter that have very mysterious properties. *They only exist in probability and that's not exactly matter.* People who try to analyze, say, psychological properties in terms of material properties, may refer to such things and that's what they mean by materialism. Besides, I don't think materialism is the villain in this story. As far as the domain of the mental is concerned, the problem is with mechanistic forms of explanation, no matter what the hardware of the mechanism might be. A mechanistic theory can be materialistic, dualistic, or idealistic. And psi phenomena have an ineliminable mental component.

Do you think a dog has consciousness? Yes, I do. *What about an amoeba?* I don't know. *What I'm not clear is if consciousness is defined as awareness or being able to think, being aware of experiencing, how far down does it go?* I don't think we have to have a final answer. I know there's a tendency in both philosophy and various branches of science that suppose there's got to be some final preferred definition of these terms, but I think language isn't like that. Language is not a calculus; meanings are not rigid entities.

One of the things I learned in writing about multiple personalities is that the concept of a person and the concept of identity are very elastic also. When we ask how many distinct individuals there are in a multiple personality, there are different answers to that question under different circumstances. We might say there's more than one person if we're concerned only about the propriety of giving different gifts to different personalities at Christmas time or treating the child personality differently from the adult personality. But if you're asking about how many driver's licenses or chances to vote the person gets, there's just one person. No one of those senses of the term "person" must be preferred over the other. They're all context-dependent. I would say the same about consciousness.

Is it true with multiple personalities that one alter can have diabetes and the other doesn't, one alter could wear glasses and the other doesn't? Alters can exhibit some dramatic physical and physiological differences. For example, eye color can change, allergies change and drug resistance can

vary. In one famous case, one personality was addicted to drugs and another one was not. *It's profound that the same body can have a totally different physiological state according to what personality is up.* It's very cool because we've known from the history of hypnosis for a long time that people can do remarkable things to their bodies. We also know that through psychosomatic ailments and miracle healings and so on. *And placebo.* People who are good hypnotic subjects can raise welts on the skin. In the case of alter personalities who've been abused, say, with cigarette burns, if you switch to that personality the burns will appear on the skin, and then they'll gradually disappear when another alter assumes executive control.

What are the philosophical implications of a body being so influenced by a mental-emotional process? How does that work? I think it's just PK on one's body. The fact is we can do all sorts of remarkable things. There were some biofeedback experiments in the 1970s by John Basmajian who found that people could be trained through biofeedback to fire a single muscle cell but none of the surrounding cells. And of course, the subjects had no idea how they did that.

How did you study them? I got to know a number of multiples who were kind enough, and theoretically sophisticated enough (in some of their alters) to share details with me about their inner life. I also got to know the clinicians treating them and even had a multiple friend staying in our house for a while. *Why were you studying them? What did you want to understand?* After I'd written a couple of books on parapsychology, I knew I wanted to write a book on the evidence for survival of death. I also knew that people suffering from DID looked a lot like mediums channeling different entities. So I figured I couldn't do a responsible job on the evidence for life after death unless I had a firm grip on the history of hypnosis, psychiatry, and DID in particular.

In some cases of DID, the various alters know about one another and even have council meetings under the surface. For functional multiples that might be the way they determine that the children get the chance to be in charge of the body and play, and that's why they're allowed to come out only at appropriate times, like in the privacy of their room or in a toy store or where childlike behavior might look eccentric but at least understandable. As far as integration is concerned, I've talked about this in-depth with some multiples who relate that the different centers of consciousness do, in a sense, coalesce and this can lead to the multiples'

first adult experiences of indecisiveness. For example, when the multiple is quite divided and going through a grocery store it might be that the children pick out the cereal or the toys and the practical alters pick out household cleaners and a different one who's good with numbers takes care of the register. *I think we all have subpersonalities so the only thing about DID people is they're just more extreme, but we all have a child and adult, and so on.*

It's not just that it's a difference in degree. It's a difference in kind because the alters in the case of multiple personality have different centers of self-awareness. So I have a musical personality and a philosophical personality but I can describe either one in the first person. But in the case of multiple personality or dissociative identity disorder, the various alters do not speak of other alters in the first person. They speak of them as he or she, and experience them as distinct entities, apparently not unlike how I experience you as a distinct entity from me.

One of the things I discovered as I got into the literature on postmortem survival is that most of the people writing about survival were inexcusably superficial about these crucial matters like the differences or the similarities between multiplicity and mediumship. *What's the connection between multiple alters and survival after death?* They look a lot alike. When a multiple switches personalities, it looks like a medium channeling a different entity. There was a very interesting film that psychiatrist David Spiegel from Stanford made after a TV anchorwoman in San Francisco said to him, "We have all these people doing channeling here on the West Coast and some of them have to be legitimate." Spiegel said, "Show me anybody who's a good hypnotic subject and I'll turn them into a channel."

She volunteered her cameraman and Spiegel made a movie where he hypnotized the cameraman whose affect then changed dramatically when he started ostensibly channeling this intergalactic being. He said things like, "Greetings friends, my name is Zantac" or whatever. Then he started spouting all these New Age platitudes. This doesn't show that we can dismiss all cases of ostensible channeling, but it shows why it's not just an academic exercise.

Did you conclude that personalities do transcend death? I'm inclined towards that, but it took me almost 400 pages to get to that point. I still think most of the people writing about survival today don't know how to

evaluate the evidence. They completely ignore important phenomena like the study of savants and prodigies, gifted underachievers, and multiplicity. *Does reincarnation connect to those savants, child prodigies, and children who remember their past lives?* Sure, because people say, for example, that if an ostensibly reincarnated child exhibits abilities that were associated with the deceased and which the child had no opportunity to learn, that somehow is miraculous. It seems a whole lot less miraculous when you study savants and prodigies.

What's another explanation for why they have those unique abilities? You need to look deeply into the lives of the other people involved, like the parents of the reincarnated child or the parents or relatives of the deceased and usually the people doing the research treat all these peripheral actors as psychological stick figures.

I think it's one of the great shames of Ian Stevenson's work, which in many other respects is extremely valuable, but Stevenson is very superficial about the underlying dynamics of the kids. *But there are really specific findings he reported like over 30% of the kids had birthmarks and/or phobias that reflected their mode of death in the previous life.* Yes, it's interesting data but the reincarnation hypothesis doesn't explain that particularly well either. *If I was hanged in my past life, I have a scar on my neck, some kind of imprint that's more than cellular from my previous existence.* But how's that supposed to be transmitted? The body is long ago dissolved. *Right, so it means that there's more transmitted than is physical.* It could be done through PK from the family of the deceased. *But they don't know about the new baby.* How do you know? *If they're in India in one village and the kid's born in another village the probability of them knowing about the birth of a baby is very small.* The probability of the case happening is very small.

I'm actually sympathetic to the survival hypothesis but I think the case has not been made persuasively until you've really examined the needs of the child currently appearing to be reincarnated, or the needs and agendas of that child's parents, or the needs and agendas of the deceased family members. In the few cases where we've got some in-depth psychological information about the participants in these cases, it looked less and less miraculous. *Do you have a specific example in mind?* Yes, I write about them in my book *Immortal Remains*.

How does this fit in with your interest in philosophy of mind and how does it fit in with memory? I think you say that memory isn't stored in the brain, which is what Eben Alexander said because he remembered after his brain was pus.* It's a complicated argument. I think the whole storage analogy is mistaken. I'll just leave it at that but encourage people to read *Crimes of Reason. People talk about the brain, this little fatty watery organ, but then there's mind. Is it possible that memory is part of Mind, which is much broader and maybe lasts after death?* I don't know that we have grounds for taking mind to be a thing any more than the weather or the economy.

When we talk about the weather you can say the weather changes, or the weather is good today, but we don't suppose that the weather is a substance even if it involves many material processes. The same about the economy. The weather and the economy are general terms for either meteorological processes or economic transactions, financial transactions. Similarly, one's mind doesn't have to be a thing. It could be a general term for a certain class of psychological properties and regularities.

And it could exist outside of the brain. Let's be careful about calling it an it, in the same way that we'd be reluctant to speak of the economy as an it. The economy probably could not exist unless there were physical financial transactions. The weather would not exist unless there were physical climatic events. It's very fashionable to say that the mind can exist outside the body and the survival evidence suggests that may be true in a way but I urge caution in the way we talk about this and caution about supposing that the mind has to be a kind of thing or a kind of substance.

After doing all this research, what's your personal hunch as to what happens to you when you die? I hope I persist in some way and I hope I can get my hair back. *Why don't you PK it back?* I used to know the famous healer Olga Worrel and I was at her house. I was playing something on the piano for the company in her living room and there came a crashing sound from the piano bench as if one of the low strings in the piano had been struck. However, there was nothing there that would have caused that and I said to Olga jokingly, "Is anyone sitting next to me on the piano bench?" and she said, "No dearie, but your grandfather's behind you, your mother's father." She said, "He's broad and he has a beard." I said, "He never used to have a beard." She said, "He does now. He can have a beard if he wants." So, I'm hopeful. *Was your grandfather broad?* Yes.

You've also delved into philosophy of time. Where did you go with that? There's a bunch of issues in temporal logic and analyzing tenses in language and some issues about the philosophy of language that turned out to lead me to some controversial arguments that maybe only a philosopher would love. Very technical.

What surprised me when I read the summary of the Galileo report in Europe is it said, "The main problem with psi research is a lack of replicated studies." I said, "There have been thousands of them, more than thousands." and they said, "But they're not the same." You wrote an article that pointed out we don't hold that kind of standard to most sciences because there's always going to be differences with different subjects, different experimenters, so the issue of replication isn't valid. That's not quite what I wrote. But it's true that there will always be differences between experiments and replication attempts. What I emphasized, though, was that one never knows in advance of seeing the results whether those differences matter. So the process of replicating experiments can't be like following a recipe. The potentially relevant variables can't be specified and controlled ahead of time.

Also, not all sciences make a big deal out of replicability. It's useful and more or less appropriate in some physical sciences but there are some other sciences with perfectly sound scientific credentials like geology, meteorology, astronomy, and cosmology where replication plays a very small role. Besides as you note, parapsychology has a pretty good replication scorecard, probably at least as good as orthodox psychology. *Probably better because they're so careful.* Right.

You say psi research should focus on spontaneous or semi-experimental cases. I'm glad there are people like Dean Radin* and others who are willing to do very creative laboratory work but I've always preferred to focus on people around whom large-scale things are happening and who can get results under many kinds of conditions and with different experimenters or observers. That helps us to have some *prima facie* idea who the real subject of the phenomena would be. I've studied PK superstars, historical figures like D.D. Home, Eusapia Palladino, or people like the Gold Leaf Lady, or a subject in Argentina I studied recently.

I think there we might get a handle on such questions such as what are the limits of psychic functioning and how extreme can the phenomena be? We don't really have a standard of measurement for psychic

impressiveness. I agree with Charles Richet who said many years ago, “It’s as interesting and impressive to see the materialization of a single finger as it would be to see the materialization of a full human figure.” We don’t understand either one, but they’re both pretty great.

Tell us about the Argentinian. He started out life as a poltergeist agent in his early teens and even today when he gets agitated, things fly off shelves. He found that by placing his hands very lightly on a tabletop, the table would rise underneath his hands and this has been studied very carefully and described in two articles in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. *What’s the point of making the table rise?* Some people don’t think macro PK is possible, but I think it’s actually the easiest kind of psychic phenomenon to document. I’m always looking for good documentation.

How did the Gold Leaf Lady in Florida make gold leaf appear on her skin? It was a golden-colored foil that turned out to be made of brass that would appear instantly and spontaneously all over her body. I’ve seen it several times. *Where might the brass come from? We don’t have brass in our bodies.* Certainly not in the quantity that she exuded. Although it looks like she’s sweating copper and zinc, which is what brass is, she would have had to have lethal amounts of the substances in her to have as much as actually appears on her. It looks like it’s a materialization phenomenon or an apport (psychokinetically getting the brass leaf from some other site and having it appear on her body).

Did it happen spontaneously and was a big surprise to her? She was having some poltergeist happenings in connection with her marriage at the time. It was, as far as I can tell, a difficult marriage, so things were appearing and disappearing, rearranging themselves. One day a carving set appeared, and her husband said to her, “What good is it if it isn’t money?” Two days later her body started to break out in what looked like gold leaf. If you want my half-assed pop psychological analysis of this, it would be that symbolically it satisfied her husband’s demand for something valuable, but she doesn’t really have to be the goose that laid the golden egg because that’s a pretty heavy responsibility.

Also, it allows her a safe way of expressing her rage against her husband. I think she felt trapped in the marriage and her husband wanted something valuable and she was giving him fool’s gold. She was giving him the psychic finger. So I think what we know about the case is its

psychogenesis. What we don't know about the case is what was really happened. Was it a materialization or an apport? *Did it continue or was it a temporary phenomenon?* It went on for many years and as far as I know it still is.

About mediums that you've mentioned, critics say they're fakes. Why are you convinced that they're genuine? As you say, the people who make those claims probably never even read the original reports. Some of the cases are just too damned impressive and it's really the responsibility of the skeptic to explain how under the particular conditions in which the phenomenon occurred, the phenomenon could have been faked. It's time for them to put up or shut up. *Skeptic Susan Blackmore* dismissed Eben Alexander's* NDE because it could have happened when the brain was functioning before it went into a coma or a little after so it's nothing special, just some hallucinations of a functioning brain.* Timestamping an NDE is very difficult. We don't really know when it occurs, especially if precognition or retrocognition is possible.

You're a referee in a series of journals; which do you recommend? I'm editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* which deals with anomalies of all kinds, not just parapsychological but could deal with matters of unidentified flying objects, cryptozoology, cold fusion, etc. The parent Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) also has a magazine called *Edge Science*. The nice thing about the SSE and the JSE is that they deal with a whole range of phenomena that are ignored or treated very shabbily by mainstream science. But for more purely parapsychological journals there's the *Journal of Parapsychology*, *The Paranormal Review,* also of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* in England, and the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*.

What about conferences such as organized by the Society for Scientific Exploration? The 2019 theme was consilience which isn't altogether clear. *Did you witness a fleshing out of the new paradigm which is really the old paradigm?* I saw various people trying to do that. I'm usually not very impressed by people's efforts to try that sort of thing. Many people seem to think that theorizing is about as easy as lying.

What's your next book? What are you researching now? I'm bringing out an anthology of previously published essays, which I'm tweaking, updating, and in most cases expanding—and hopefully improving. *You wrote six books?* Six books not counting the new one being hatched, three

of which came out as revised and expanded editions, yes. *And over 60 articles.*

What do you do for fun? I'm also a musician. I do 3D photography and I have a fabulous wife. *Have you had kids along the way?* No.

The world's situation seems to be getting worse with climate change, the rise of autocrats, and growing inequality. Are you hopeful or pessimistic about our future? I reject the premise of your question. I don't think the world is getting worse. There have always been tyrants. *What about climate change? We've never been this bad.* I reject that too. There are lots of scientists who think that the role of human-caused climate change is not all that clear and they're ignored the same way parapsychologists are ignored. The whole issue is very politicized. I say we should be very careful about conclusions we reach.

The climate's warming, there are more extreme weather events, tornadoes, floods, scarcity of water because of drought. How can one deny that? The question is whether it would've happened anyway. There's no doubt that humans are contributing to the climate but whether it's really something to worry about I think it depends on the model we use and the models, as far as some people are concerned, have not been all that successful. Also, for decades (at least) we've heard dire warnings about apocalyptic warming or cooling, supposedly due to happen in just a few years, and they've always been wrong. Why should we keep trusting the people who cry wolf?

I don't pretend to be an expert on this, I just think it's important to be suspicious about what scientists are saying in an area that's as politicized as this particular one. Anyone who's been involved in parapsychology knows how the scientific community can be an unreliable guide to the truth, and vicious with critics who don't stick to the received wisdom, and I believe we should be suspicious here for exactly the same reason.

Books

ESP and Psychokinesis: A Philosophical Examination, 1979, 2002
The Limits of Influence: Psychokinesis and the Philosophy of Science, 1986, 1991, 1997
First-Person Plural: Multiple Personality and the Philosophy of Mind, 1991, 1995
Immortal Remains: The Evidence for Life After Death, 2003

The Gold-Leaf Lady and Other Parapsychological Investigations, 2007
Crimes of Reason: On Mind, Nature & the Paranormal, 2014
Dangerous Pursuits: Mediumship, *Mind and Music,* 2020

Jon Klimo, Ph.D.

Channeling and Mediums

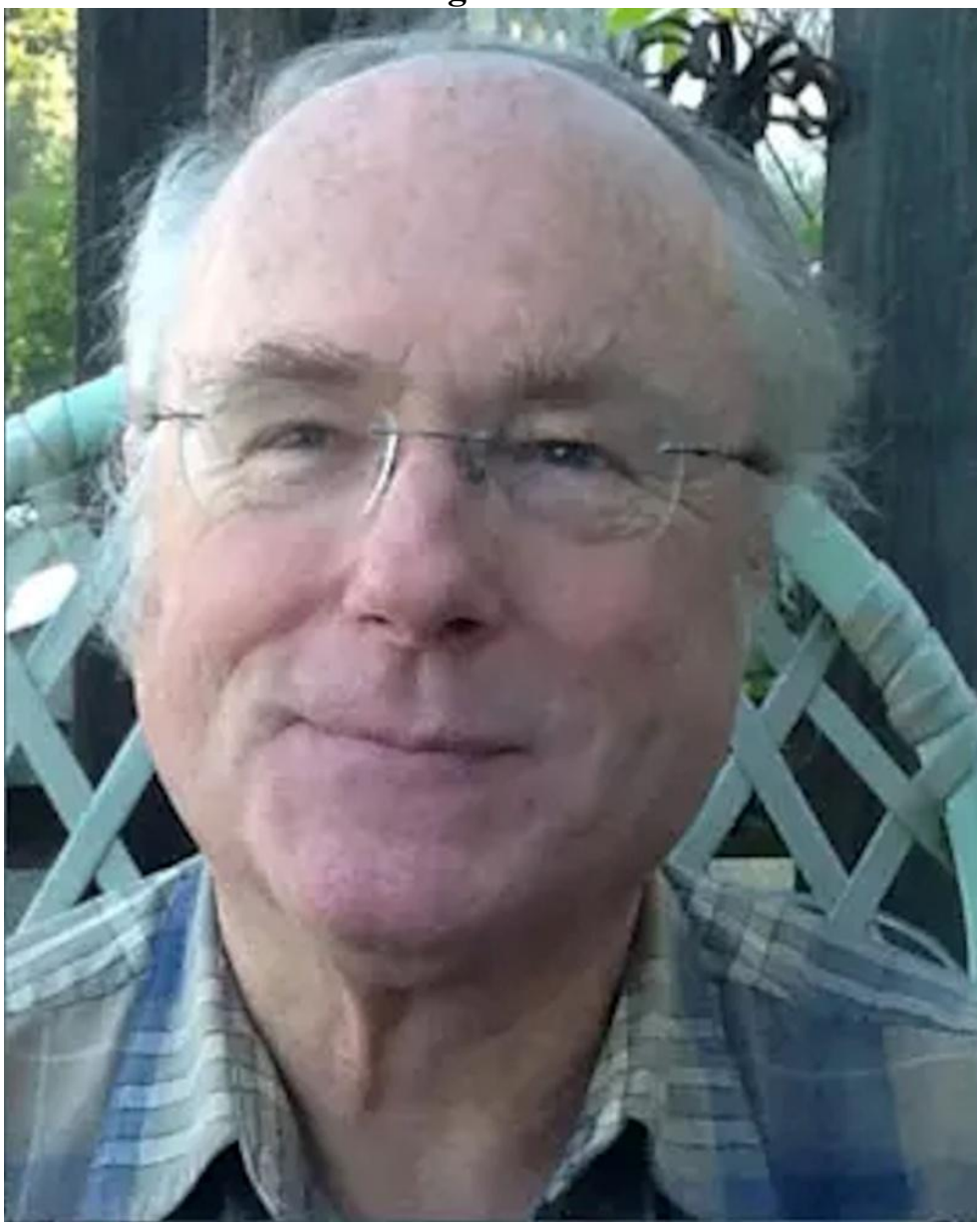


Photo by Jane VanderVeer

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What does Dr. Klimo mean by consensus reality? Multidimensional reality? What path does he follow?

What is the phenomenal research methodology?

What is his view of "open channeling?" What is mediumship?

I was born in New York City, March 3rd, 1942, on the Upper East Side. *Do you identify with being a Pisces?* Very much so: I'm not very grounded, fishy, oceanic, diffuse, and gladly so, a dreamer of sorts. *You're Myers–Briggs is an INFP. What's interesting to me is that everybody that I've interviewed with the exception of three men are intuitives.* I'm glad that I'm loose like a sieve and my shoveling between taking things in and giving things out is very loose and unguarded. I spent decades training clinical psychologists and understanding clinical psychology. I take the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders with a grain of salt, but I don't take Jung with a grain of salt because I always tell my students I have a kinship with him, Maslow, and William James.

Charles Tart* interviewed people who had a reputation in the sciences to find out what kinds of anomalous or non-ordinary experiences they've had. I was one of the first two to three people he asked to go on record. One of the experiences was I heard a voice calling my name, when I still lived in New Jersey as a professor at Rutgers University, lying there in bed. It simply said my name, but underneath it seemed to know everything about me; it felt like it cared about me, loved me. It said, in essence, "Get out of bed and do some good work; you're here to do things." Carl Jung had that experience too, which he wrote about it in *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections.* He talked about procrastinating and then felt he was surrounded by this huge operating amphitheater full of like-minded people, almost all of whom were in spirit form, keeping tabs on him because he was not doing his work. So I went to my desk and got to work.

Tart used the first experience, but not the second one. The second is on my website, about 8000 words, which I had on the book promotion tour

for the channeling book about 1987. Tart was worried people would question my sanity. Jeremy Tarcher, the publisher, sent me all over the country. Early in the tour, as I walked to my hotel elevator in Washington D.C. to do a radio interview, the whole space-time continuum got wobbly for me. In the early 1960s, I had gone crazy, losing ego boundaries and my connection to consensus reality, leaving for what felt like a larger reality.

I was diagnosed at the time as paranoid schizophrenic with delusions of grandeur and a Christ complex. I thought I was here to help and save and make bridges and be a shaman of shamans. After a couple of years, I came back to the surface, with no help from anybody else, but it kind of wore off and I said it was like coming back as a "walk-in," in the sense that I was coming back different from the person that left with more wisdom and more intuition.

Marcel Vogel was one of the leading scientists at IBM who invented a lot of things, a real genius. When I met him, I told him, "Years ago I seemed to go crazy and leave reality, leave my ego, and then I came back and I don't remember anything, except I trust the whole process, but I'm curious." He said, "I'm going to close my eyes and lie here for a while and get in touch with my spirit guides." (I'd never consciously been in touch with my spirit guides.) He said, "Jon, my guides say you had the luxury of many months without being in an extended NDE, but you had an opportunity to compare notes with your buddies over there and to get some suggestions about what to do for the remainder of your incarnation."

Often a clairvoyant will come up after one of my talks and say, "I saw a 12-foot Indian standing behind you," or, "I saw Tesla and he was right over there and was whispering things to you." I've learned to not just tolerate ambiguity but to eat it for lunch. I love not knowing the ultimate answers [*see Dean Radin**] and it gives me curiosity renewed every second to try to find not only the grand unified field theory with consciousness but how God works. Frank Barr was another genius guy, a physician, and authority on melanin and neuro-melanin. His research showed that it's at the heart of pineal gland, Descartes's bridge between the mind and the body.[*See Serena Roney-Dougal.**] Now, as a philosophical idealist and mental monist, I talk only about the ultimate reality of consciousness. I've recently watched this new idealist guy on the block Bernardo Kastrup* come into focus in *Scientific American*.

I reached a lot of people as a teacher because I was myself and I couldn't help but be. I started that way as a professor at Rutgers University and then I went over to a small, no longer existing graduating school of psychology, Rosebridge Graduate School of Integrative Psychology. If I stay simultaneous and multi-dimensional as I am, I'm screwed as far as mainstream thinking goes. It's what Ludwig Wittgenstein, the philosopher, called "the problem of private language" or what the Bible would see as the Tower of Babel falling in on itself. *The ancient Greeks were talking about idealism, so it's not a new concept.* Hegel is one of my godfathers, along with William James and Jung.

Let's go back to your childhood. What were the influences that led you to be a psychologist? What was their spiritual orientation? My mother was quiet, a nice person, agnostic. My father was a bigger-than-life fire-breathing atheist and he was loud and pretty self-assured but underneath he wasn't at all that sure. I was the oldest of five kids and he used to think I was a "fairy" or a poet rather than a guy like him who bruised his knuckles on the school of hard knocks. He was a sea captain, world adventurer, and a friend of Ernest Hemingway (and wrote a book about him).

I always felt a kind of rejection from him and toward the end of her life, I said something to my mother after he died. She said, "Did it ever occur to you that he felt the same way about you?" He was wondering, "Does Jon really accept me, understand me, or like me?" Towards the end of his life, he told me, "Jon, you're the kindest man I ever met," but for him, kindness is not going to get you anywhere in this big, bad, testosterone world. My mother was quiet in the background. When he was away at sea she'd be raising his five kids, the glue that held it all together, and the love.

What led you to Brown University and psychology? I was kind of a B+ student but during the interview, highly creative and all over the place. The representative from Brown said, "We want people like you here. I'll do everything I can to get you here," and he did. I met Willis Harmon at IONS when I came out to see him in 1981 or '82. He said, "You seem to know as much or more about channeling than anybody I've talked with. You ought to write a book about it." He contacted literary agent and author John White, which led to the book on channeling which came out in about 1986 and then a longer second edition a decade later.

I see myself as a scientist in a qualified way. C.P. Snow coined the idea of the "two cultures," science and technology versus the arts and

humanities, but I've never been able to stand being in just one of them. My corpus callosum straddles them so in that regard I'm a poet who is a scientist, an artist who theorizes. At Brown and other places, I studied the philosophy and history of science. I identify with Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* We need more of the anomalous to jar us up on one elbow half-awake within the shared dream to become a little more lucid so we can have more efficacy, more self-awareness with regard to the dream material we're embedded within. But that's not going to happen if we stay limited to the discrete state of consciousness that goes with consensus reality. You have to be the fool on the Tarot card, or as Jung said, "You don't just fall off the diving board. You dive off." That's the way to lose control of something and surrender into a larger possibility. There's a message to the madness.

How did you get from having agnostic, atheistic parents to your own understanding of God, spirituality, and Jesus? My parents said, "Go figure it out for yourself." I've always done that in the presence of gurus, textbooks, universities. I wish there were more R.D. Laings around to commiserate with. That led me to a multidisciplinary disposition—not just the two cultures of arts and science but the interblending of the two.

San Francisco Bay Area author and interviewer Michael Krasny wrote *Spiritual Envy: An Agnostic's Quest*. I mention it because he's very articulate, it's a beautiful book. He said, "I have to come back to this feeling of doubt, put my hand into the wound and feel it. I wish it wasn't that way but it is." He said, "Sometimes I wish I could have the revelations, the visions, that transcendental connectedness," like Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* and Rudolf Otto's *Ideas of the Holy*. Dozens of books make the case for unbridled unification of the field from the individual to the large subsuming whole.

I'm a real student of language, the philosophy of language, the psychology of language, authors like Susan Langer's *Feeling and Form* and other books of hers where she looked at the different parts of a family tree of the arts and compared and contrasted them. I was in qualitative research methodology in the social sciences, especially phenomenological research. I probably chaired 50 or 60 dissertations where my students used that approach and I know the literature well.

What's being investigated in a phenomenological research methodology is human experience: How do I uncover, unfold, explicate the

meaning of the experience you had? We ask, "Can you tell me more about that? Anything else come to mind about that?" and then you have two levels. Phenomenological methodology essentially takes the verbatim descriptive material and breaks it into its smallest meaning units and then you try to take those building blocks and build them back up inductively into constitutive themes that comprise the experience.

Let's talk about your books. In Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources, *how did you find your mediums?* I'm not huge on the channeling of entities, but that's not to say that entities like Michael or Abraham or Seth aren't fascinating. *Did you have any evidence that they were, in fact, some higher source of information?* Channeling is genuine and authentic; look at all the novelists who tell you that their fictive characters take on a life of their own. It's all one great universal consciousness field, it's all non-locally connected.

I'm interested in looking at what I call, "open channeling" which does not involve specific entities, but takes Aldous Huxley's metaphor of the one universal Mind-at-Large that we each experience in a tremendously constrained way through the "reducing valve"' available to each of us. A rare few of us are blessed (or cursed) with the ability to dilate that reducing valve and allow more of Mind-at-Large to come through to our local minds. That's my primary interest in channeling.

In hindsight, decades later, how accurate was what the channeled entities predicted? For the most part, the channeling material is very high caliber, often very testable, and then there's those with a very low batting average. *Seth rates high for you?* Yes, and I like the book, *The Impersonal Life,* by Joseph Benner. I would say to my students: Imagine you're somebody else and then just start automatic writing. You can even be a god, or an inanimate object, or you can imagine talking to anybody or anything — including to God—and see what comes out of you. Anybody can do that, just like Russell Targ* and his buddies realized that anybody can do RV. It really does show the empirical truth of non-local correlatedness across everything.

Do you believe that there are higher-level extraterrestrials who try to help us out? Oh, yes. I would actually start some conferences saying I identify more with certain extraterrestrials than I do with fellow human beings, which is true. I've been homesick all my life, but then the question is: Where is home? *Which E.T.s do you feel affinity with? Some people think*

the Pleiadeans are highly evolved. It's all so relative: We have people channeling Pleiadeans but it really may just be a fragment of their own consciousness and their own creativity, and then there are people who think they're channeling Pleiadeans and they probably actually are. Then we have people who don't think they're channeling anything but may be channeling entities other than themselves coming through their own unconsciousness.

I like Darryl Anka and his entity Bashar. I like Norma Milanovich, Ph.D., a university professor, who channeled a book from Arcturianss titled *We, the Arcturians: A True Experience*. I like the channeling of scientific material. The International UFO Congress was the main annual conference for UFO stuff. Bob Brown invited me to take charge of a day of the conference about channeling extraterrestrials. I invited five different channels to find out if any of it is verifiable in any respect.

Let's go to the next book about Suicide, What Really Happens in the Afterlife. *How did you contact people who had committed suicide?* I primarily used the subset of channeling called mediumship dealing with deceased human spirits. This goes back to F.H.W. Myers, the godfather of attempts to show the veracity of channeling and mediumship material. *Were they glad they did it or were they not glad they did it?* Most of them are not glad they did it. My co-author was a former doctoral student of mine who was for 30 years a successful anesthesiologist. We also dealt with Islamic fundamentalist suicide bombers because my feeling was if there's some way we could help undermine the belief that, "I'm going to go to the right hand of Allah and be beloved," we should. On the other side, they start to live with their repercussions because every suicide has to pick up the pieces.

In an NDE, you get to come back with a taste of the afterlife or as a walk-in. There's also an instrumental transcommunication (ITC) or electronic voice phenomenon (EVP) subset of which I expanded on in the new edition of my channeling book. *Have you experienced entities talking through the radio or the tape recorder?* Limitedly. It's not my forte to take that experimental route or to look for the smoking gun.

Is there anything else striking in your suicide book? When you kill yourself, you go against the grain of what you could say is God's plan, or the spiritual hierarchy's. You're going to have to come back again; we're talking about reincarnation, karma, or the Multi-World Theory of Quantum Mechanics. You can have more than one person collapsing the quantum

wave function at the same time. My other co-authored book, *Handbook to the Afterlife,* was a primer in the sense that parapsychology studies it.

How can people communicate with people on the other side? Do the self-discipline to create a quiet meditative place, maybe a protected, sacred space. The scientist William Tiller created what he called "Intention Imprinted Devices," including imprinted places like sacred places. Especially if you can do it in groups, if you can put intentionality into a physical device or place. You do your own version of setting up your own self-intention-imprinted place. You go in there with the purpose of connecting to The Larger Reality. Dean Radin's* Buddhist monks put love in chocolate and tea, like putting good intentions into water as Dr. Emoto did. *Or Stephan Schwartz* into wine.*

Move to an altered state, such that your mind is at least put at bay for a while so that you are potentially more in relation to Mind-at-Large. *When you do that kind of listening, do you feel like you've had contact with particular personalities?* No, I've never had the benefit of feeling I've ever made any kind of connection at all. As a Rutgers University professor, I did a presentation at the American Educational Research Association years ago about everything that exists is also symbolic.

Coming back to earth, what's the glue that holds your marriage together for 40 years? We love each other, and as a poet, I unpack that and talk about it at times. She does truly understand me, like probably nobody else. Let's see what happens if I'm continually talking from the place of a poet in confluence with the sciences and philosophy. That's the thought experiment I've been embarked on for decades. People often say to me, "I used to think you were crazy. However I had a strange dream after that or I've had an anomalous experience since," or "I had an OBE or NDE." All I can do is on faith believe that you're out there just like anybody else's faith. I haven't had any revelatory direct experience other than those earlier-mentioned excursions into what I call The Larger Reality and what I have harvested as the contents and objects of Mind-at-Large.

You're almost finished with a new book: What's that about? There are two of them. One is based upon what I call my lyrical essays or my prose poems, titled *Spiritual Canticles for the New Millennium*. Maybe there's a channeling aspect of it in that I would sit down, feel inspired, and surrender

into it. It would come to an end and I'd have 20 or 30 of these. I believe they're the best stuff I ever wrote.

The other one I used to call *How We Create Our Own Reality* before hardly anybody else was talking that way except maybe Seth. I also call it now, *The Emerging Spiritualization of Science*. Our culture is now rich with this juxtaposition of science and spirituality. Most recently I called the book *Essays on Quantum Idealism,* derived from a mixture of philosophical idealism and quantum idealization.

How did you put those two together? If you try to marry mainstream quantum physics and philosophical idealism to make a new baby that's really functional and works, you have to do things that a Ph.D. physicist or academic philosopher would never do. I guess that's the poet in me talking. I followed theoretical physicist Amit Goswami for years; he was trained in the Asian-Indian view and I feel so comfortable with that. Then I'm the kind of open-channel who allows more of Mind-at-Large into my local mind than others and in such a way where all things are truly possible.

What's your feeling about whether humans are going to survive the way we're polluting the environment and inequality is increasing? I'm optimistic because the bad guys or the shadow side of each one of us, microcosmically and macrocosmically, the and group mind and unconscious-to-conscious ratio of us, and the galactic neighborhood aspects of extraterrestrials, are all having their day. The constraints that have been on individual human beings and *en masse* within the consensus reality—those constraints in regards to larger mind, energies—can't much longer hold forth. The good guys won't let it happen, that is, the good guy in you and in me. I believe in spiritual hierarchies as well as extraterrestrial sci-fi hierarchies. I believe in angels, spirit guides, ascended masters, fairies, and elves. You can be as gullible as I am until proven otherwise. I'm trying to be a change agent within the system.

There's such a vaster reality than can be controlled or predicted by the currently incarnate human spirits that are around right now; greed, the Cabal, the Illuminati, whoever, are the reasons that the world is the way it is right now. Noam Chomsky carefully looked at what he called "manufactured consent," how consensus realities are maintained, all the workings of mind control. We're embedded in a vast, multidimensional reality.

I think that the global warming situation is going to change for the better. This too shall pass. There seems to be enough evidence we can actually get the leverage to tilt the system and change it but how many people's attention are you going to get to take part in that? It's like the whole chaos theory that the butterfly's wings can affect things on the other side of the planet. We're in such a far-from-equilibrium system, which is why I'm optimistic, because of the locus of the change agentry for those of us who have taken an internal locus of control where we are educated enough with regard to the infrastructures within us.

I'm a pessimist in the sense that as long as the holding pattern underlying an awful lot of what we're doing on this planet stays somewhat the same and we don't have enough lucid dreaming within our shared dreaming cognizance and comparing of notes about what we do about it, it's not going to change.

The last question is: what do you do for fun? I read about these kinds of things. I get on YouTube. I consume Ted Talks. Who are my colleagues, my cohorts, my like-minded, like-spirited people? I just want to feel less alone, to be heard and understood. In 1959, Scandinavian psychologist and minister A. Van Kaam did the first doctoral dissertation study on "The Experience of Really Feeling Understood by Another." That has always haunted me and I used to tell my doctoral psychology students that I felt that one of the greatest things someone could do for someone else, and especially in the clinical and helping professions areas, would be to have them feel "really understood" by you. I keep hoping to have others make me feel this way as I desire to have them feel in my presence.

Also, since quantum physics is insisting on it now, let's introduce consciousness at every level and in every way. I am speaking here as a philosophical idealist who, since the 1970s, loves to read extraterrestrial stuff and channeled material. In the process, I have been warned to not be so open-minded that my brains fall out and yet I have on occasion let that very thing happen. I love to read scientists and philosophers and academicians where I can see them starting to open up, more like Kastrup.* I like to confound my identity and functionality with that of Mind-at-Large, God, or Source, the universal consciousness field. In 2014, I established my own non-profit philanthropic corporation, which I call "The Larger Reality Foundation."

Books

Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources, 1986, 1998. (The second edition contains 100 more pages.) Excerpt available at https://visionaryscientists.home.blog/2020/01/24/channeling-by-jon-klimo/

Suicide: What Really Happens in the Afterlife? co-authored with Pam Heath, 2006

Eds. Rey Hernandez, Jon Klimo, Rudy Schild. *Beyond UFOs: The Science of Consciousness and Contact with Non-Human Intelligence, Volume I,* 2008

Handbook to the Afterlife, co-authored with Pam Heath, 2010

Ed., The Changing Faces of Therapy: Evolving Perspectives in Clinical Practice and Assessment, 2016

Jeffrey Mishlove, Ph.D.

Parapsychology Case Studies

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

After interviewing thousands of authors who are creating the non-materialistic paradigm, what patterns does Dr. Mishlove see in their backgrounds?

What did he conclude after studying training programs to develop psi abilities?

What field studies has he conducted?

I was born in Wisconsin, December 1946. *Do you identify with being a Sagittarian, the most common sign of the visionary scientists?* I actually do. A Sagittarian is a very high-minded person with philosophical interest ruled by the planet Jupiter. The Sagittarian half-horse, half-man represents in us a dual nature. I don't put a lot of stock into it but over the years I've gained many insights from thinking about astrology. I think my Myers-Briggs was ENTJ but it's very close

You had an awareness of consciousness when you were 10 years old. I used to climb on the rooftop of our house and sit out there and look around at the neighborhood. One of the things that I reflected on was: how come I'm me? Why am I at this body? How come everybody else is in a different body and I happen to be this particular one sitting on this particular rooftop? It seemed like a really intriguing puzzle to me. *Did you come up with any kind of possible answers*? I'm still working on it.

How do you define consciousness—that's the buzzword lately. It's awareness or even the experience. I think the philosophers have a good word for it; they call it *qualia,* which means you know you're having an experience of something. *Do the koi swimming around in my fish pond have qualia?* Why not? I would assume that they know.

What were your family's attitudes towards religion when you were growing up? Very conventional for a Jewish family living in a small Midwestern town. By that, I mean that Jewish people in that era tried very hard to assimilate, to be considered as Americans and not really Jews, just another branch of the Judeo-Christian family. *Did you have a Hanukkah bush at Christmas?* No, I had a conventional Jewish background with no discussion of the mystical side of Judaism. I only learned about that after I left Fond du Lac. Judaism is the most rational of all religions.

What about Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism? That all came later, quite specifically it came in 1972 when I had a dream about my Great-Uncle Harry, who was a very pious religious man. He was the president of the Orthodox synagogue in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. It was a very powerful dream so that when I awoke from the dream, I was crying and singing at the same time.

I wrote home to ask: How's Uncle Harry? My mother called me right away and asked, "How did you know Uncle Harry just died?" That naturally raised a lot of questions in my mind. Where did that dream come from? It was a very powerful dream in which Uncle Harry seemed to be

talking to me in a very deep way about my life. I asked my mother to send me some object that Uncle Harry owned so I can remember him. My aunt gave me a book she said was uncle Harry's favorite book called the *Tales of the Baal Shem Tov* which was a book of Jewish mysticism from the Hasidic movement.

I realized that Uncle Harry was deeply involved in all of that but he kept it secret because, as I said, Jews were trying to fit in. He was born in Russia near the town of Lubavitch, with a very famous Hasidic rabbi with whom he studied. *So you have in your ancestral genes an interest in the mystical?* I would go even further because now I've learned that other direct descendants of Uncle Harry also had similar dreams around the time of his death. *He was saying goodbye and getting things organized for his departure. That's very considerate of him.*

Were you Bar Mitzvahed? We grew up in a conservative Jewish synagogue, different than Orthodox. I had a good Jewish education. I loved all the Jewish music and I had a Bar Mitzvah in which I actually conducted the entire Friday evening service and large portions of the Saturday morning service. It was a very healthy Jewish education, but by the time I was 16 I had pretty much rejected all that.

Did you replace it with Buddhism or something else? I was young, wild, and free in college and experimented with drugs. I developed an interest in religious mysticism because I had a secular, skeptical attitude toward life. I thought, "What's going on with these crazy people who report that they see ghosts and that they're having mystical experiences?" It must be some sort of a psychopathological aberration, so when I was an undergraduate in college I decided I would write a senior honors thesis on the psychology of religious mysticism. I figured there'll be some explanation like what kind of psychopathology. I started reading people like Abraham Maslow and William James. I arrived at the conclusion that there was something actually quite authentic to these experiences and my initial hypothesis was wrong. By that time I was taking LSD and having some pretty powerful experiences of my own, so I decided you couldn't just dismiss these as pathological aberrations.

All of that happened before I had the dream about Uncle Harry. I had concluded the mystical experiences were actually a sign of a healthy psychological makeup and then I began having the dream of Uncle Harry and other precognitive dreams. I was a graduate student at that time in

Berkeley in criminology. My interest actually was in clinical psychology. I wanted to enroll in Berkeley where they had a clinical psychology option available in the School of Criminology. I had studied criminology as an undergraduate so it seemed like a natural way to enroll at Berkeley, which is a very hard school to get into.

I was doing fieldwork at San Quentin prison and the psychiatric unit, doing group therapy with murderers and sex offenders. I decided I wanted to explore human deviance but explore the positive side of humans, but there were many obstacles to doing that. You could study crime and psychopathology all you wanted but Berkeley didn't offer programs in creativity or intuition and certainly not in parapsychology. They did have a program at UC Santa Cruz called the history of consciousness.

I agonized for months about how am I going to shift over to the study of positive forms of human deviance until one day I knew: I'll have an answer in a dream that night. I did have a dream that changed my life that night; I was visiting the home of friends of mine who lived in Berkeley. When I knocked on their door they weren't home, there was no answer but I found the key and let myself in their apartment. I found a magazine on the middle of the living room floor and was paging through it when I awoke with a feeling of exhilaration, like wow there's the answer, but I didn't have a clue so I acted out the dream. I put on my tennis shoes and ran across town to the apartment, knocked on the door, nobody answered so I let myself into their apartment. There in the middle of the living room floor was a magazine just as I had dreamed. It was named *Focus* and literally brought focus to my life.

It was the magazine of listener-sponsored radio and television in San Francisco. It made me think I could pursue my interests by getting involved in the nonprofit media, which was a huge shift for me because in those days I didn't own a radio or a television. I considered myself a long-haired hippie and any kind of electronic communication to be phony-baloney since the only authentic human interactions were face-to-face, but at that moment I changed my mind. I went over to KPFM in Berkeley and said, "I'm here to volunteer to do whatever you need."

Within three weeks I learned how to produce a radio program and including one about how you don't have to be from out of town to be psychic. The program director told me, "We have an interview slot we'd like you to fill every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon." All of a sudden I

find myself sitting across the table from world-class experts. Authors passing through San Francisco on a book tour would end up in KPFA and I had a thousand people listening to my conversations twice a week.

That gave me the confidence to create my own interdisciplinary doctoral major at Berkeley in parapsychology using faculty members from different departments. Charles Tart* was one of my committee members. The professional skeptics in an organization called CSICOP tried very hard to get the university to revoke the degree. Enormous obstacles were put in front of me the closer I got to getting the degree and then after I got the degree there was the concerted effort by outside skeptics to pressure the university to revoke the degree.

How did they know and why did they care? From the point of view of these skeptics, parapsychology represents the rising tide of superstition and contradicts their materialistic worldview. They figured any claims of a parapsychological nature are due to error and fraud. After 39 years, I still have the only doctoral diploma that says parapsychology ever rewarded by an accredited university anywhere in the world. *Various visionary scientists said in debates with skeptics they suggest let's talk about a particular case and the methodology but usually, the skeptics haven't read them.* That's generally true because they believe that you don't need to study this once you were already convinced it's all nonsense. Now it's changing very slowly but we've got a long way to go.

We don't understand the 95% of the universe that is dark matter and dark energy and there's so much we don't know, to be so sure that what parapsychology says is inaccurate is arrogant and lazy. They would say science is quite successful using materialistic metaphysics to build an atomic bomb, so it works. Because technology is all based on materialism, people make the philosophical error that because it works it must be an accurate description of all of nature. People think we can ignore anything that can't be measured and described using materialism and it might as well not exist. *Then they can throw out quantum physics and nonlocality and the observer effect, etc.* Some people say, "Shut up and calculate." You know the calculations work and you don't need to bother with philosophical questions that you can never answer like, "What does it all mean?"

How did you get to your TV shows "Thinking Allowed" and "More Thinking Allowed?" We recently uploaded a new video with one of the most famous skeptics named James Alcock. He has a new book on the

psychology of belief about how people form belief systems. People will murder or commit suicide based on their beliefs so it's important that we form accurate beliefs. We agree that people should always question the sources of their beliefs. I'm putting up three interviews every week these days. I now live in Albuquerque, but when I lived in the San Francisco area or in Las Vegas (where I lived for 17 years) people were always passing through so I did live studio interviews. However, in Albuquerque, we have fewer visitors so I've started doing Skype interviews and the quality is actually pretty good.

After interviewing hundreds of people do you see patterns in what makes them courageous enough to go against the dominant materialist paradigm? I do think that it takes a certain amount of courage. Very few people were willing to do the drastic unique thing that I did. I would say 95% of the people who explore these areas scientifically do so because, like me, they've had powerful personal experiences. The other 5% to 10% do it out of intellectual curiosity. Also, I've discovered that quite a number of prominent people in parapsychology have a Jewish background, along with Buddhist teachers, prominent Sufi teachers, prominent yoga teachers, etc. This involves, to a large degree, giving up the conventional Orthodox practices of Judaism but looking for the essence of Judaism. Jews are a tiny minority but Jewish people are prominent in every cutting edge activity in which I've ever been involved.

You teach parapsychology to practitioners at the Center for Spiritual Living. What do you teach? It's a basic introductory course largely based on the first book I wrote in 1975, *The Roots of Consciousness*. It's an overview for people studying to become ministers. It used to be called the Church of Religious Science and is now named the Centers for Spiritual Living. I figure people in ministerial practice are going to encounter people having psychic experiences and need to be aware of the data base of these experiences to counsel those people.

You also wrote books based on your TV interviews. A 1995 book is transcripts of interviews from the original *Thinking Allowed* series. *Then you wrote* Psi Development Systems. That is based on my doctoral dissertation at Berkeley; I wrote two books before I graduated. The first one was the *Roots of Consciousness* published in 1975 because I had to find a way to demonstrate to my committee members that I had the basic knowledge required to begin to write a dissertation. It was an overview and

then I did a dissertation on training psychic ability, which became a book titled *Psi Development Systems*.

The book was a historical, sociological and parapsychological analysis of methods for training, divided into three sections. One was ancient historical methods such as yoga and shamanism. Another chapter described popular methods such as Scientology, Silva Mind Control, Transcendental Meditation and the Berkeley Psychic Institute, which made claims about training psychic abilities. Many individual psychics taught courses so I wrote about the methods that they used and began evaluating them and their methodologies such as physical exercises, meditational practices, or keeping journals. The final section dealt with experiments tested in the laboratory such as relaxation data.

What did you conclude about how to develop psi skills? There really wasn't any conclusion because in order to properly evaluate from an experimental point of view whether any given training program worked, even if you score before and after the training program you still don't know whether the training program or something else causes them to score higher afterwards. There aren't any before-and-after studies. All you could say is, we have quite a bit of research that shows that a variety of relaxation methods are conducive to higher scores but just because you create a condition that's conducive to a score that's not the same as training somebody.

There's an additional problem because even if you do the most rigorous experiments with very complex methodologies, you still have the experimenter effect in parapsychology. You can't rule out that experimenter used psychokinesis to get the kind of experimental result that would confirm the cherished hypothesis. That's an absolute limit of what you can accomplish with the experimental method in parapsychology.

Marilyn Schlitz does an experiment and the British skeptic does the same thing and he doesn't get the same results in his lab, which indicates the experimenter has a huge impact. It creates a cloud on every form of process-oriented research in parapsychology. We don't yet know how to distinguish between the confirmation of an experimental hypothesis as opposed to the experimenter themselves influencing the experiment. Not just the experimenter; it could be everybody who reads the experiment or any participant. It could even include people in the future who will learn about your experiment.

In a sense, the whole human community is exerting a potential psychokinetic influence on every single experiment not just in parapsychology but—if you accept the data of parapsychology—on every other experiment in virtually every other field of science, certainly in the social sciences and psychology. That's a rather dramatic conclusion but a lot of good experimenters are doing research and are very much aware of this problem They figure if the data gets replicated in enough different laboratories, under enough different circumstances, maybe then we can rely on it.

I certainly believe in the scientific method but my major work has been the case study, not an experiment. [*See Stephen Braude*.*] *That's qualitative rather than quantitative science.* It strikes me that we can learn just as much from field studies as we can from experiments, although hardcore skeptics will point out reasons why you can never trust a field study. My third book was a ten-year investigation of a man named Ted Owens, described in *The PK Man: a True Story of Mind Over Matter*. The methodology was well established in the 19th century by the Society for Psychical Research and is still a very valuable methodology, using the experimental method with perfect legitimacy to determine how strong psi abilities are. What is the strongest effect that we can show in the laboratory? Showing that we can increase the robustness of the phenomena will help the field progress.

The PK man could change weather and manifest UFOs. Did you see him do those amazing things? He would send me letters saying I'm going to do a demonstration. Afterwards, he would collect newspaper clippings: He would typically predict things that you would not expect like heat waves in the middle of winter or cold spells in the middle of summer or movements of tornadoes, hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes, and power blackouts. Newspaper clippings were mostly how I was able to validate what he did. *Did he say how he was able to do it or to summon UFOs?* Sometimes he claimed he was in telepathic contact with invisible beings from other dimensions. He called them the space intelligences and said they had powers, so he just sent them a telepathic message and they would do everything. Other times he said it was his own psychokinesis, so it's hard to say what was really going on. Roughly two-thirds of the time, unusual events that you would not expect to occur did in fact occur.

In The Alpha Interface: Empirical Research on the Financial Markets*, you talk about predicting the financial markets. Was this similar to what*

Russel Targ, Stephan Schwartz* and Garret Moddel* did?* I did some studies like that but they didn't work out particularly well. I looked at conventional researchers in the field of economics and business, studies related to the financial markets. I put together a series of three books looking at published empirical research that would be relevant for people who were traders because I was actually doing a lot of stock market and futures trading myself. I had some huge successes and I had some huge failures; all in all, I came out slightly ahead. I'm living a very comfortable lifestyle so something must have worked. I certainly didn't make very much money in parapsychology.

I work with neural networks, for example, artificial intelligence. A big interest of mine is the use of AI to forecast financial futures. *Is AI better than human forecasters?* Some people seem to be very highly intuitive and gifted and don't work with any rules or principles other than their own intuition. My biggest successes came from AI. The neural networks and other forms of AI can see things. The very notion of a neural network is to try and get a computer system to emulate what researchers think the brain might be doing to process a lot of data and see patterns that most humans won't be able to see.

At one period in my life, I took a $50,000 training account and in six months it was worth $350,000, but when market conditions change then you have to be able to change and adapt and keep up with that. People who work in the field of AI are still trying to figure out how to keep up with the markets because the markets are like a living system. You've got maybe a million or more participants who are always studying and observing and changing constantly depending upon political, social, and economic factors.

What's your next book? The video channel "New Thinking" on YouTube is taking up all of my activity. The biggest obstacle that people working in this field face is that there's almost no funding with almost no opportunity for support by the universities or philanthropic institutions. The skeptics have managed, through the use of ridicule as their weapon, to prevent much funding from coming this way. The most important thing I can do is to put into the public conversation dialogues with the most thoughtful people who are doing scientific research and the philosophical theoretical work to support that scientific research. We have email discussion groups for people who are working professionally in the field of intuition as researchers, teachers, writers, trainers, and consultants; and it's

largely, at this point, a self-organizing mutual support network for those people.

What organizations do you think are doing the most cutting-edge research? IONS is doing very important work, along with the Rhine Research Center. In England, quite a number of universities sponsor parapsychology work. At the University of Edinburgh, students can earn a doctoral degree, but not a diploma like mine that says parapsychology. I think my emphasis is a little different than that of most psychologists because I think parapsychologists need to pay attention to thousands of years of history and philosophy and its spiritual disciplines. You won't get that by studying psychology. Dozens of people now in the UK are doing parapsychology research and teaching parapsychology and sponsoring dissertations on parapsychology, far more than we have today in the United States.

What do you do for fun in the face of all your work? I like karaoke. *Could you give us an example?* I posted a couple of videos of myself singing karaoke. I love being outdoors in the wilderness areas where I live in New Mexico, and when I lived in California and Nevada there was always wonderful outdoor scenery to explore.

In the face of autocrats and the climate disasters, are you optimistic or pessimistic that we'll find our way out of that mess? I am naturally an optimist but my own personal belief is that it's going to get worse before it gets better.

Books

The Roots of Consciousness: Psychic Exploration Through History, Science and Experience, 1975, 1997
Psi Development Systems, 1988
Thinking Allowed, 1995 (TV show 1987 to 2002)
The PK Man, 2001

Web Site

https://www.newthinkingallowed.com/Listings.htm

Helané Wahbeh, N.D., MCR
(Master of Clinical Research)
Mind-Body Connection

Photo by Jordan Engle

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Dr. Wahbeh reports, "At IONS, we hypothesize that everybody has the capacity to access information and energy not limited by time and space. However, the way that people do this is unique to them, which we call their noetic signature. Just as each snowflake is different and yet equal in its exquisite beauty, each individual's noetic signature has inherent value and our noetic diversity can be collectively celebrated."

What are your experiences of receiving information and energy not limited by time and space?

How does IONS define channeling? Consciousness?

How does the author think political change occurs?

How do naturopathic and integrative doctors approach healthcare?

What is the author's experience with meditation, both personally and in researching its effects?

I was born in Hayward, California in 1972. I am a Sagittarius, November 30th. *Are you interested in looking at character from that perspective?* I have many Sag characteristics. I also have a lot of Scorpio in my chart and a Libra rising, so I deeply resonate with connecting with the spiritual and deep profound topics and wanting to go more deeply rather than staying on the surface. I think of Sags as the philosophers. *That's why there are more visionary scientist Sags than any other sign.* I love to travel. Also being nature-loving, an adventurist, I enjoy fun and adventure, which is a Sag trait as well. I am an INFJ from a Myers-Briggs perspective and a rat in the Chinese zodiac.

What's the most exotic or unusual place that you've traveled to? I love Greece and I've been to the Middle East. I'm a first-generation Palestinian; my family emigrated in 1967 and I was born in the US. Going to the Middle East is an incredibly deep and conflicted experience. I have been to Auschwitz in Poland as a peace delegate and representative of Palestinians for a dialogue amongst Israelis, Jews, and Palestinians, and people from all over the globe.

How involved were you in the book, A Memoir of Profound Generational Healing? I wrote it. It's the story of our great-grandmother's, grandmother's, and my mother's and my story. It tracks the ancestral patterns through the ages and how we owned them, healed them, and transformed them to a freer, unshackled life. We hope it's an inspiration to

all women out there, but also to men and boys because the women are the ones who are raising the boys. We need to balance the masculine and feminine within all of us.

What is fascinating is, since we wrote that book, studies are coming out about transgenerational trauma and how your mother's trauma gets translated into your genetics which then affects your hormonal systems, etc. There is something there about healing your ancestral patterns and owning where you come from so that you can see how it affects your life and then clearing it. In the book, we give our stories and a number of different exercises to help people work with that.

In homeopathy, they have a concept of miasms, the energy signatures that pass through generations and lead to susceptibility to certain illnesses. Do you think there is a physiological basis for that or do we just socialize certain behaviors that lead to illness? I imagine it's probably both, so if your ancestral line had tuberculosis, you may end up with a tubercular miasm that has influenced your genetics in a specific way or a history of syphilis ends up with a syphilitic miasm. Anecdotally, it's been seen over and over again.[48]

The youngest generation in your book is your niece who is 11. It seems to me that young people are so different, so tolerant, so open-minded, so courageous. Do you see that with your relatives as well? Yes, I see it in my niece and nephew and my own children; their capacity to be who they are and really shine is amazing and beautiful. I have two boys: 18 and 6. *It seems that these generations of boys don't think of girls as having cooties or being inferior; they feel like peers.* Yes, they're much more balanced and it feels like there's not as much drama. With the kids I am around, they feel much more comfortable in their skin and more authentic, incredibly creative, with an amazing capacity to manifest what they want. They're very concerned about the environment and proactive ways to heal the planet. *I've been doing research on global youth attitudes for a decade and am also impressed. My next book is about young women climate activists.*

Do you have any hope for a Palestinian homeland, a two-state solution—it seems so hopeless. It does seem hopeless when you look at the governmental factions and the extremes on both sides. I try to hold the intention of an energy shift happening on an individual level, a grassroots transformation, similar to the shift from the materialistic paradigm into something different that your book explores. I imagine that it is not going to

happen top-down, but from the bottom-up, where enough people in the area are not willing to hold the victim/tyrant pattern anymore, when they are willing to go into their hearts and understand that we are all one. When we have a tipping point of enough people who actually embody that, then I envision the world will change. Is that going to happen in my lifetime? I don't know. I pray that it does.

This sounds like the 100th monkey syndrome (although the story of the monkeys in Japan that discovered how to wash fruit was proven to not be accurate) but I wonder if that's the principle you are thinking about. Yes, *Power Versus Force* by Dr. David Hawkins is a great book to look at in terms of energetic frequency. Can I scientifically prove that it's going to happen that way in the Middle East? No, I can't. *The RNGS in the Global Consciousness Project around the world show there are human waves of focus.* Yes, RNGs have demonstrated some shift away from randomness during large global events, both positive and negative, when multiple people are focusing on the same thing. What we haven't necessarily seen is a causative effect.

Some studies of Transcendental Meditation (TM) have seen reductions in crime in areas when people were meditating. That's the only body of evidence that I know of so far where there was a conscious intention to change an outcome. *It plays into Rupert Sheldrake's idea of metamorphic fields.* Fred Travis and other researchers at the Maharishi University still publish quite regularly. They've been focused on physiology, as with many analyses looking at TM, improving blood pressure and cardiovascular markers and brain coherence. A group led by William Tiller and Deepak Chopra are doing another intention experiment with individual outcomes, asking whether their health symptoms improve.[49]

Your family has many people who are channels and mediums and you went to your first seance when you were 10. Yes, my grandfather was very interested in the esoteric occult. My family is from a small town outside of Jerusalem where they were raised in an Orthodox Christian tradition. My great uncle was an Orthodox Christian priest, so there was a very traditional Christian background. As a priest, he would go out and do exorcisms, unique spiritual practices that you don't hear about every day in Christianity. My grandfather was very interested in questions like, What happens after we die? Who are we? and, What is the soul? In his own way, he was doing research. So, he, with his young wife—my grandmother—

would go around to observe people who said they were possessed or who had some extraordinary psychic ability or trance ability and "collect data."

Eventually, they began having meetings at their home where people would get together and talk about these topics. At one of those meetings, my grandmother went into a trance and started channeling and everyone was startled and amazed. They continued to have these meetings with my grandmother channeling. It wasn't just one purported entity like you see some channels today, like Esther Hicks' Abraham, but a variety of beings. They did tell me one time she spoke in a different language that she didn't know, which was quite fascinating and I'd love to do a study to replicate that. When they came to this country, they continued having similar meetings. They found that most of their children, my mother included, have some sort of psi ability, whether it was trance channeling or a different type. My uncle was the main trance channeler of the family and automatically wrote a book while in trance titled *From a Gun to a Flower.*

As a 10-year-old, when I first saw my uncle was trance channeling, I was amazed and was also a little afraid because I was thinking, "Oh no, can they jump in me?" As time went on, my mother discovered that she had the capacity to do the same and does that regularly now. I always felt like I had some channeling ability. At IONS, we have a broad definition of channeling as receiving information or energy from beyond time and space, which exists on a very wide spectrum from gut hunches that almost everybody experiences and rarer experiences like trance channeling.

Since everybody likely has the capacity to channel in some way, it's about discovering what your own noetic signature looks like. My specific channeling signature includes claircognizance, clairsentience, clairaudience, and I've been able to do the trance channeling as well. I use channeling for personal guidance. We also walk our talk at IONS, researching the intersection of science and direct experience. We incorporate meditations and various direct experiences of tapping into this noetic wisdom regularly. People can access the noetic in a variety of ways such as in meditation, through dreams, and being in nature.

When I am doing that kind of work, it's like a thought comes as guidance. Does it seem like that to you or do you actually hear or feel information come in? It's quite varied and depends on the situation. I can feel in my body with goosebumps that something is truth and that can guide me to go down a specific path. [*See Paul Smith.**] When I connect with

somebody and they say, “I feel like I should do this rather than that,” I can get a big rush in my body of “Yes, go that way.” There is an experience of just knowing something mentally. I have no idea where this information came from and I don’t hear a voice in my head: I just have an internal knowing. I can visit a new place and have a knowing about what transpired at that location.

Do you use it if you are working with a patient or in the lab when you are working on experiments? I am not in private practice anymore but when I was, I definitely did use my intuition to support them. In naturopathic medicine, we are always trying to get at the root cause of what’s going on and so I might get some insight into what was creating the obstacle to cure for them. At IONS, we certainly encourage all of us to tune into all of our resources, including from beyond space and time. A very important aspect of channeling is that we do not take any information we receive as definitive truth at face value but add the information to all the resources we have to see what makes sense to move forward with.

Have you specifically channeled an entity like a relative that passed over? I have. *It’s kind of like you are talking for them, you are just repeating what they are sending to you?* Right. There are different types of channeling. Most mediums are mental mediums, who connect with a supposed deceased human and repeat back the information they get. Trance channels usually will allow their body to be used as a vehicle for the supposed being to directly communicate so there is no filter per se. The supposed being is using the medium’s body to speak directly. I’ll give a little caveat here. I think everyone has to decide for themselves about their own belief systems about whether these are real separate discarnate beings or an aspect of the channel’s higher self or who knows what? We can’t prove what the source of this channeled information is. So that’s why I keep saying “purported,” but I’ll stop saying that because I made that caveat.

When I am receiving information through clairaudience, I will hear information and then I will repeat it back. If I am doing it through trance channeling, I don’t know what’s coming out of my mouth until it does. My subjective sense of it is they are using my voice box to come through my mouth. There was one time when my grandmother came through, and it felt like more of my body was being used. It felt uncomfortable to me and afterwards, I felt very different and altered and it was very intense.

Through our channeling studies at IONS, we did a study with 13 full-trance channels and asked them to rate their level of consciousness in terms of how aware they were of what was going on and how incorporated they felt the being was in their bodies. John of God, in Brazil, said that he lost years of his life because when he is in that state, it's like he is asleep. *The "Sleeping Prophet" Edgar Cayce was like that too, I think.* But most of the channels we're meeting through our research are awake and aware and have some kind of witnessing of what's happening.

Do you think there is a genetic explanation for your family's cluster of psi ability or simply that there is an environmental nurturance of those kinds of abilities? We are doing a study now that looks at high functioning psychics and controls. We are doing a genetic analysis of genes and gene networks to see if there is a difference between the two groups. We are testing to see if there is a genetic component because channeled material has come through saying that genetics does play a part in the type of channeling you can do. So perhaps not everyone can trance channel but everyone can tune into their gut hunches. In Italy, Patrizio Tressoldi,* developed an out-of-body hypnosis protocol where people learn how to do an OBE and then can invite beings to communicate through them. It's all done in a very safe and protected and high energy way. We are still in a very early piloting phase so it's going to take some time before we report official studies.

What path led you to become a naturopathic doctor? I was always very interested in health and mind-body medicine and I went to UC Berkeley. I was also very interested in archaeology and anthropology, so I was an anthropology major and did all my pre-medicine courses. I took my MCAT to go to allopathic medical school. I was in a medical anthropology class when we had a visiting speaker from a naturopathic medicine college, which I had never heard of before. The speaker described the tenets of finding the root cause, prevention, treating the person as a whole being, and that the body has its own innate ability to heal itself. I was on fire with resonance about this type of healing. I felt that allopathic medicine was incredible and absolutely had its uses but was so symptom-focused and struggling with being able to deal with chronic disease. So, I went to naturopathic medical school in Portland, Oregon.

When I graduated, I enjoyed being in private practice but something kept pulling me back to research. After undergrad, I did some work at the

UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center as a research assistant and psychometrist where the whole scientific method and research question was really fascinating to me. After a few years of private practice, I received a post-doctoral fellowship at the National University of Naturopathic Medicine. When I was at school there, they didn't have a research department but after I graduated, they created one where I received research training. I did a fellowship there and also at Oregon Health & Science University, where I also received a master's in clinical research. Eventually, I received a National Institutes of Health grant to look at mindfulness medicine in combat veterans with PTSD.

How do you define complementary and integrative medicine? It used to be complementary and alternative medicine which was a moving target because as soon as something became integrated into the Western model, it wasn't alternative anymore. So, now, depending on how it is working in partnership with the allopathic Western models, it can be complementary or integrative. Mind-body medicine could apply to any modality that uses the mind to affect our physical systems. Psychoneuroimmunology is a very well-established field showing that our mental state influences our nervous and immune system. *I think of Candace Pert's book,* Molecules of Emotion. Exactly, and there's also psycho-neuro-endocrino-immunology where you add the endocrine system.

There's lots of really good evidence that our mental state influences our physical body. *Placebo does that.* Placebo used to be a bad word where effects not related to pharmacology were dismissed as "just a placebo effect". But capitalizing on the placebo effect can maximize health. Naturopaths definitely try to maximize the placebo effect. *I read a study that patients do better if they have a kind, caring medical professional that gives them a little bit of time and doesn't just look at their chart on the computer.* Yes, absolutely.

The NIH has a complementary medicine center. Yes, it's the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). It used to be alternative medicine and they changed it to integrative. If you look at the National Cancer Institute, they have a budget for complementary integrative medicine that's the same size as the entire NCCIH. *What I think is so profound about naturopathy is the freedom to not rely only on pharmaceuticals and surgery to treat a symptom because it seems, even for psychiatrists, the focus is on pharmaceuticals.*

I think it's useful to readers to know what your most difficult times have been, the challenges, and how you've coped with them. In my first marriage after my son was about a year old, I hit some troubles with my spouse and we ended up separating. That was probably my all-time low, my dark night of the soul. It was during that time that I found one of my main spiritual teachers and was able to come out of that deep depression and angst and see exactly what was going on. I was a young mother still nursing, by myself feeling depressed and low, struggling with meaninglessness and hopelessness. I feel really grateful that I was able to come out of that even stronger. Now I know nothing or no one can ever take me that low again because I was so caught up in the story and not knowing who I really was.

Who was your spiritual teacher? Leslie Temple-Thurston with CoreLight, centered in New Mexico and South Africa. Most of their courses are done online and I completed the Spiritual Warrior training program and a four-year teacher-training program. They have monthly group calls and meditate and connect to what's happening on the planet. I highly recommend the work. Of course, there are many different paths to awakening and that's just one of them but I highly resonated with the way that it was presented by CoreLight.

You've also done mindfulness meditation popularized by Jon Kabat-Zinn. How are they different? We owe him a great debt for popularizing meditation in the West. In order to be palatable in a clinical academic setting, much of the spiritual, esoteric aspects of the original traditions that it came from, Buddhism and Hinduism, were removed. Mindfulness is taught in many wisdom traditions; they are just given different names. I took the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction course and taught classes. By the end of the eight-week class, I would have students saying to me, "I am feeling this oneness thing and I am dissolving and what does that mean and who are we?" It would often bring them to a spiritual place where they would want to look more deeply at spirituality.

The Western model of mindfulness-based clinical programs does not highlight the spiritual aspects, but rather looks to it as a tool to improve wellbeing and health. I don't have an issue with that. I think it's wonderful at any dose to bring mindfulness, consciousness, and awareness to our lives. The most striking difference between the CoreLight work and the more clinical mindfulness meditation work is CoreLight is coming from a very

specific spiritual practice but the tools are very similar: meditation, being present, understanding that we are not our thoughts, we are not our emotions, etc. *Do your boys meditate with you?* Yes, with my youngest, before bed we just chant his name to clear energy and then we chant the letters of his name, which is really fun to bring focused attention to sound. *Some schools are using mindfulness with good results for students.*

What did you discover in the NIH grant to treat PTSD with meditation? The most remarkable finding was that although the meditation didn't necessarily heal their symptoms, it allowed the vets to be more comfortable with their symptoms. Before they learned the meditation practice, they might be triggered by something and get very upset, which would make the symptoms worse and last longer. After they were meditating, they'd get triggered and they'd say, "Let's feel the trigger." They were able to bring more compassion and acceptance to who they were and to be okay with whatever they were being or feeling. I think we all need that on our planet. If we chase the positive, the negative is always underneath that. We have to own it all and be comfortable applying loving kindness to ourselves and others, regardless of what the story is around you.

Did you see a quantitative reduction in stress? Not in the PTSD symptoms. There was no change across the groups. There are other measures that were improved by the meditation groups. It was a mechanistic study so we had four groups: one was mindfulness meditation; another was slow breathing; the third was mindful slow breathing, and the fourth was sitting quietly. We had four groups that all had an active treatment and what we found is, that sitting quietly doing an activity that they loved was therapeutic so they also had improvements. When I say there was no change, there was no change across the groups. So, the mindfulness meditation group had similar improvements in PTSD to a group that was sitting quietly for 20 minutes.

Have you tried acupressure tapping like Emotional Freedom Technique for PTSD? No, but a group in Portland did tapping for the combat veterans for free and I got to see their work. It was pretty amazing, just on an anecdotal level. Some studies have been completed showing improvements with tapping as well. Garrett Yount, one of our IONS scientists, published a very interesting study on EFT for vets with PTSD, as has Dawson Church.

There's a lot of discussion about consciousness as part of this new paradigm, could you define it for us? It kind of depends on who you are talking to. So, you have little-C consciousness and if discussing with a neuroscientist, it would refer to our awake state. Am I experiencing consciousness or unconsciousness and different variations of that? It's our mental capacity to perceive what is around us; it's a mental brain function. Many people believe that's what consciousness is and there's nothing more than that, right? *Materialists, yes.*

There's another camp that believes that Consciousness with a big C is what interconnects us all, not limited to the physical brain or physical body and it permeates everything. If you imagine an iceberg with the two tips just peeking up above the water, Consciousness could be the interconnected base of all being. On the surface, it appears that we are independent and separate from each other, but in reality, we are actually connected. The term consciousness is so loaded and we are trying to get away from using that word at IONS. *What do you use as an alternative?* We try to explain it or we use the term *noetic. What about awareness or information field?* Right. We could talk for days about that.

How do you define parapsychology or psi? Parapsychology was developed to evaluate psychology beyond the norm. Psi is used to apply to phenomena that people experience that are outside of our five senses—there's overlap. I gave you a definition of channeling. I personally like the channeling term because it's broader and it doesn't have as big of a stigma. But psi usually refers to psychokinesis, clairvoyance, precognition, retrocognition, and for clairvoyance, it's like RV and telepathy. *What's retrocognition?* Seeing backwards in time. Some people believe that they can project their consciousness into the 1800s and tell you what was happening at a specific moment in that time. *Could they change it?* Some people think they can but I don't know if there's been any evidence to support that.

At IONS, Dean Radin is working with influencing plasma with intention and there's the medium study; what else is going on?* We have two main research programs happening at IONS; one is the IONS Discovery Lab, a measurement research core that collects data before and after different transformational workshops. That can happen in person at our Earthrise Campus or online. That measurement core collects information about the participants' sense of interconnectedness, extended human

capacities, and well-being. The goal of the IONS Discovery Lab is to develop the largest database of transformative practices in the world, which then allows us to answer big questions about which modalities affect those relationships the most and which people's characteristics are at play in those relationships.

Our second research program is called IONS X which is an application-driven, cutting-edge research program to show in real-world practical applications that consciousness is fundamental. Our first project under the IONS X umbrella is to develop an on/off switch that is ethical and operated with our intention. The switch could be biological like phosphorescent cells. It could be mechanical. We are going to research a variety of questions like: What should the target switch be? Who should be the operator of that switch? Does it need to be a psychic? Does it need it to be a male or a female or what are the characteristics of the operator? And then what are the moderators? Does it have to happen at a full moon or when there's a solar flare and how do we maximize that effect for it to be reliable, reproducible, and demonstratable?

Is changing the plasma part of that kind of approach? Yes, those experiments are looking at different ways to be able to create this psi switch. Why would we want to do that? There're all these arguments about the materialistic versus the post-materialistic paradigm, right? So, if I was able to walk into my house and with my intention direct a switch to turn on or off a light and not physically move the switch up or down, but just mentally create some change that creates a physical action, then I don't have those arguments anymore. I don't have the arguments of people saying, "Consciousness can't possibly exist without the brain." But how can you say that I just turned my light on with my intention? It has to exist outside the brain, otherwise, I would not be able to do that.

Gary Schwartz in Arizona is working on a switch to be influenced by the people without bodies on the other side.* The SoulPhone, yes, I am very familiar with that. *Do you all share information, like with Windbridge when you are working on mediums?* Yes, we are very friendly and collegiate with Julie Beischel* and Gary Schwartz*. My intention as the Director of Research at IONS is to collaborate, so we try as best as we can to work with other researchers on studies.

Do you have another book in mind or are you going to keep producing articles? The gold standard in research is the peer-reviewed

article, so I'll be producing many of those. I am also working on a book on the science of channeling that will be published Fall 2021.

As a productive person with a family, how do you make time for fun? I love reading sci-fi fantasy books and watching sci-fi fantasy movies. I am a gardener so I work the land and deeply enjoy being in nature and rejuvenate incredibly in that way. I also love to travel.

Anything else that you would like included in your chapter? To continually go within and trust that the answers are within you and to make it a daily practice, even if it's a minute a day, to go inside and ask, "What is my next best highest step?" Be guided by your inner noetic wisdom to make that step, to support yourself individually and for our beautiful, gorgeous planet that needs all the help it can get.

Book

Free to Be Me: A Journey of Transformation through Generational Healing, 2015

Website

https://noetic.org/profile/helane-wahbeh/

Conclusion

The visionary scientists' research expands our sources of knowledge beyond logic and what we can see visually to intuition, ESP, dreams, precognition, remote viewing, synchronicities, non-human guides, and a higher intelligence. Jim Carpenter names this other-dimensional source of information "First Sight" and Robert and Suzanne Mays believe that psi phenomena occur on the fifth dimension. Many people who have near-death experiences report reviewing their life lessons with the help of loving guides and sometimes receive accurate information about their futures. Mediums and channelers get information from formerly incarnated spirits or higher dimensional beings like Seth and Abraham.

The materialist worldview limits our access to information only to what we can learn from our five senses. Skeptics like Susan Blackmore maintain that extraordinary experiences like hers can be explained by brain functions. I'm convinced there's more than the little brain by the psi research with statistical results far beyond probability, case studies, and my own access of information from beyond my thought process. Many of the visionary scientists meditate in order to go beyond their thoughts to quiet inspiration and peace. As Einstein said, "knowledge is limited whereas imagination embraces the entire world."

Not only do we connect with non-physical information, but psychokinesis and psychoneuroimmunology show that thoughts and intentions can influence matter. Numerous lab experiments use only intention to change cell growth, the rate at which yeast release oxygen, change the direction of plasma, and so on.[50]

This ability could be developed to enhance health, as evidenced by the placebo effect, intercessory prayer, and one multiple personality having a disease and the other not having it in the same body. Not only did William Bengston's students and trainees heal mice injected with cancer, but he is also researching how to capture the healing signals to share without healers present. He found that cancer cells do change in response to these signals sent through speakers.

The non-materialist paradigm adds consciousness or spirit to what we should explore and use; humans have more potential than the dominant paradigm recognizes. Patrizio Tressoldi hopes that "our studies of practical application of mental interaction from a distance are replicated by

investigators to convince people that our human potentialities are much more than we experience in normal life."

Please comment and stay updated at visionaryscientists.home.blog.

Notes

[←1]

Thanks to physicists Fred Alan Wolf and David Kagan for correcting this section. Thank you to transcribers Manisha Hariharan, Joshua Herrera and Nicole Hobbs and of course to the courageous and kind visionary scientists.
Ten science questions and results:
https://www.businessinsider.com/science-questions-quiz-public-knowledge-education-2018-5
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[←2]

Our video interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rsmIcnmISc&t=117s
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Nessa Carey. "Junk DNA: A Journey Through the Dark Matter of the Genome," 2017.
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